

CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY:
A STUDY OF ANTHONY TROLLOPE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED NOVELS
1847 - 1883

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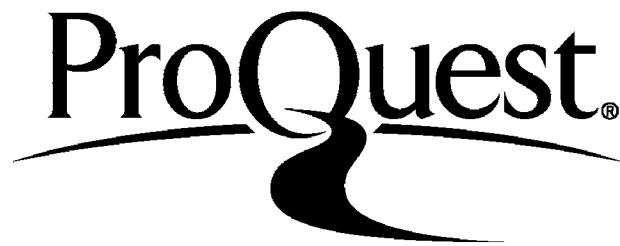
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ABSTRACT

Trollope's literary career over thirty five years shows remarkable consistency of aims and achievement. The object of this dissertation is to trace the continuity of Trollope's interests in major areas of human fulfilment such as love, marriage and problems of moral conduct.

The first two chapters deal with his life, reputation and attitudes towards the novel.

Chapter Three raises the theme of most of his novels - the young person in love, and Chapter Four shows the maturing of love in marriage and family life. Chapter Five completes this central section by studying the conditions of Single Life.

Chapter Six is devoted to Trollope and Ireland, relating personal fulfilment with the responsibilities and pressures of the outside world. The novels about Ireland span Trollope's writing life and therefore provide useful illustration of his consistency.

My final chapter considers the obligations of the individual in the social environment, with particular emphasis on political life, and the quality of society as a whole.

Throughout the thesis my concern has been to move from the sociological orientation of much Trollope criticism to questions of literary merit. The principle of continuity has been illustrated by an examination of themes from a range of novels outside the

Barsetshire and Palliser series which have been usually in the forefront of discussion. The principle of consistency has been demonstrated by fuller illustration from The Three Clerks, Ayala's Angel, The Bertrams and The Claverings (Chapter Three); Orley Farm and He Knew He Was Right (Chapter Four); The Eustace Diamonds (Chapter Five); The Macdermots of Ballycloran, The Kellys and the O'Kellys, Castle Richmond, The Landleaguers (Chapter Six); The Way We Live Now (Chapter Seven).

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PREFACE

Today in Trollope studies one is aware of more serious attention to his qualities as a novelist. The odium attaching to his self-revelation in the Autobiography, mis-read and exaggerated by his immediate posterity, has diminished, and although no full edition of his work has so far been undertaken at least an eloquent appeal for one has been voiced.¹ Yet in some ways the most recent Trollope revival has pointed in the wrong direction by emphasising once more those qualities of sociological observation - the "photographic" realism of his novels - for which he was so much praised in his lifetime and patronised after his death. Reading the most recent study on this well-trodden path it is apparent that Trollope continues "to elude precise definition."²

Yet there are encouraging signs certainly. More intensive analysis of single works is being attempted. More articles are getting to grips with Trollope's artistry, the structure and style of his novels, markedly different from the general impressions of "Mr. Trollope's Young Ladies" and similar essays of a generation

¹Gordon N. Ray, "Trollope at Full Length", The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXXI, 4 (August, 1968).

²Donald Smalley, "Anthony Trollope", in Victorian Fiction, A Guide to Research, ed. Lionel Stevenson (Harvard, 1964), p.196. Robert M. Polhemus, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968).

ago. Some of the criticism, indeed, perhaps strains too hard to rescue Trollope from the ranks of middlebrow entertainment, finding in each "newly discovered" novel some sterling qualities which fit a particular line of enquiry relevant to modern thought: it is absurd, for example, to speak of such a slight novel as Cousin Henry as a Kafka^kesque study of a little man crushed by a hostile society.³

My efforts towards definition do not lie in the traditional path, which has tended to put the social issues first, thereby ignoring to some extent the qualities of Trollope as an artist and reading him primarily as an inspired documentary diarist. One immediately thinks of the way historians such as Professor Asa Briggs have used Trollope as a seismograph of mid-Victorian society. However legitimate this kind of study is it does not in my view lead to a just appraisal of Trollope, the novelist, and it is worth noting that one recent critic has recognized the limitations of the socio-historical approach to this novelist, stressing that the upper middle class society Trollope chiefly wrote about hardly changed its essential characteristics during his whole literary career.⁴

³Robert M. Polhemus, "Cousin Henry: Trollope's Note from Underground", Nineteenth Century Fiction, XX, 4 (Mar. 1966), pp. 385-9.

⁴J.A.Banks, "The Way They Lived Then: Anthony Trollope and the 1870s", Victorian Studies, XII, 2 (December, 1968), pp. 177-200.

The task, therefore, as I see it, is to try to understand Trollope's position within a fairly stable, well-defined hierarchical society. Trollope is not the writer of change and development, but of consistency and continuity, of balance and compromise. He is not deeply interested in "ideas"; he is not a thinker with a distinctive contribution to the great scientific, moral, social debates of the day; he is not an original critic even as to the nature of his own craft, although a lifelong advocate of the dignity and worth of literature. He is not, either in private life or his novels, an advocate of causes. But he is a professional novelist, touching on a wide spectrum of affairs and concerning himself with human nature in many manifestations. He has opinions and, indeed, prejudices, but he has always in control the novelist's power of neutrality and organization, combined with a tremendous gift which Henry James called his "complete appreciation of the usual".⁵ It is indeed a peculiar skill to utilise imaginative power to render the commonplace in human behaviour, but to be able to enhance this vision with such compassion and breadth of view amounts to genius. An approach to Trollope which concentrates therefore on the most significant themes over the range of his novels and the literary, rather than sociological, values they reveal seems the most useful line of enquiry at this time.

⁵Henry James, Partial Portraits (London, 1888), pp. 100-1.

At once a difficulty suggests itself in the mass of material confronting the scholar. I have attempted to solve this problem by working from a range of novels drawn from the course of Trollope's career and deliberately crossing the boundaries suggested by Sadleir and others. I have also avoided the Barsetshire and Palliser novels on the whole, because they have already received much critical attention. I have still been left with a very large territory indeed, and of necessity my selection has been somewhat arbitrary. Here personal preferences have certainly played a part, and no doubt I have behaved like most Trollopians in advancing the case of particular favourites in the canon. However, my object is to discuss Trollope's achievements as a novelist always with the consistency and continuity of his work in the foreground of attention.

Michael Sadleir's works on Trollope, particularly his Commentary, have been constantly at my side, and although I have contested several of his judgements in Chapter Two and Chapter Six, I have been stimulated by his knowledge and love of Anthony Trollope at every stage of my research.

Chapter One

TROLLOPE'S LIFE AND WORK

"It's dogged as does it."

- The Last Chronicle
of Barset.

Bradford Booth, Trollope's last critical biographer, found that the divergence of opinion surrounding the man and his work amounted to a "chaos of criticism."¹ Even Michael Sadleir, who admired Trollope so deeply, concluded his study in 1927 on a note of bafflement and irresolution.² It is fitting irony that a novelist of such avowedly modest intention and such plain statement of commonplace experience should continue to tantalise and evade us.

The paradox extends to Trollope's life as well as his work, and an up to date biography is urgently needed. The situation at present is that we have had three major studies in the eighty-eight years since Trollope's death, of which the total effect has been to increase our bewilderment at the diversity of opinion.³ Vast

¹Bradford Booth, Anthony Trollope, Aspects of His Life and Art (London, 1958), p.229.

²Michael Sadleir, Trollope, A Commentary, Oxford Paperbacks No. 35 (London, 1961).

³Sadleir, Booth and A.O.J.Cockshut, Anthony Trollope, A Critical Study (London, 1955). An extremely hostile study which portrayed Trollope as "an embittered egoist", L.P. and R.P.Stebbins, The Trollopes, The Chronicle of a Writing Family (London, 1946), showed how diverse opinion can be about the novelist. A recent book,

quantities of recollections and anecdotes about the novelist remain to be collated, and many gaps in our knowledge, as, for example, the blank period of Trollope's early manhood, need to be filled. Getting to know Trollope the man is, of course, no easier than trying to fathom his achievement as an artist from a vast output of forty-seven novels, five travel books, four collections of short stories, eight other non-fiction works, an autobiography, several lectures and a wide miscellany of journalism. Among those who have ventured into this perplexing area of scholarship Michael Sadleir is supreme. His Commentary, following a breezy memoir by T.H.S.Escott,⁴ helped to bring about a revival of interest in Trollope in the late twenties, on which subsequent critics have built. Chief among these have been Professor A.O.J.Cockshut whose view of a somewhat "dark" Trollope was to some extent countered by the late Bradford Booth in 1958, who swung the pendulum back to a Sadleirian position. To my mind this is substantially the correct view.

Nevertheless, enough ambiguities exist even in the picture we have to make it necessary for my first chapter to be devoted to

Robert M. Polhemus, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope (Univ. of Calif. Press Los Angeles, 1968), attempted to relate Trollope's growing despair with the increasing tensions within his society.

⁴T.H.S.Escott, Anthony Trollope, His Work, Associates, and Literary Originals (London, 1913).

aspects of Trollope's life and career, especially as in the ensuing pages I wish to consider major concerns of his fiction which arise from the character and personal happiness of the man in his domestic life. Is there a composite picture to be made from the biographical sources I have named and from the many glimpses of the author by the inveterate collectors, diarists, and autobiographers of the late Victorian period? What do we read between the lines of his own splendid Autobiography and his even more revealing correspondence? These are my field of enquiry, particularly the letters, which are useful not for what he says very often, but for the way in which he says it. If we read them to discover his thoughts on politics, church revenues, female rights or business ethics, we are disappointed. Just as he embarks on one of these topics he irritates us by excusing himself for lack of time. "I seem to be living away at a perpetual gallop," he writes to his brother, Thomas Adolphus, in March, 1852.⁵ Even as an old man with angina, Alfred Austin said, he went on dashing from cabs or getting out of a railway carriage before the train had stopped.⁶ His correspondence was "virtually a log-book of the busiest man of

⁵Letters, 31, p.15. All quotations from letters are from The Letters of Anthony Trollope, ed. Bradford Booth (London, 1951). In each case I give the number of the letter followed by a page reference.

⁶Alfred Austin, "Last Reminiscences of Anthony Trollope", Temple Bar, LXX (January, 1884), p.134.

Victorian letters."⁷ But not only is it a correspondence of a man in a perpetual hurry, but of a man who did not write with an eye on posterity, and this makes it a valuable quarry for the discriminating reader.

That he wrote his letters frankly, hurriedly, and unaffectedly at once gives us an impression of his honesty and his modesty. He had few illusions about himself or his work, and was able to write towards the end of his life without recrimination or false pride that he did not think his name would be remembered in another century. Charles Lever, chafing under a species of exile in Italy, envied him that serenity and lack of rancour.⁸ To a young aspirant for literary fame we find Trollope in 1861 advising a little more humility:

Remember that I & a dozen better than I am ^{have} _^ to tuck ourselves into contracted limits every month.⁹

Two years later, on October 18, 1863, when his stature as a writer was rapidly growing, he wrote to George Eliot:

In Rachel Ray I have attempted to confine myself absolutely to the commonest details of commonplace life among the most ordinary people, allowing myself

⁷ Letters, Introduction, xxi.

⁸ See E. Downey, Charles Lever, His Life in His Letters, II (London, 1906), p.227.

⁹ Letters, 139, p.90.

no incident that would be even remarkable in every day life. I have shorn my fiction of all romance.

I do not know what you who have dared to handle great names & historic times will think of this. But you must not suppose that I think the little people are equal as subjects to the great names. Do you, who can do it, go on.¹⁰

This is a typical example of Trollope's modesty. His magnanimous appreciations of fellow writers give further evidence of a gentle disposition, quite at odds with the pictures we are often given of a rowdy, blustering, somewhat coarse-grained individual. Pugnacity and loudness were indeed part of his image, particularly among those with whom he felt defensive. The following collage of impressions covers a range of young and old who knew him at the height of his success and in old age:

a good fellow, modelled on Silenus, with a large black beard ... an incarnate gale of wind. He blew off my hat; he turned my umbrella inside out.... He was singularly unkempt, and his clothes were very wrinkled and ill-made... He was a great diner out, and agreeable talker. He loved the good things of life... I don't think Trollope pleasant, though he has a certain hard common-sense about him and coarse shrewdness that prevents him being dull or tiresome.¹¹

¹⁰ Letters, 207, pp. 138-9.

¹¹ S.M.Ellis ed., A Mid-Victorian Pepys, The Letters and Memoirs of Sir William Hardman (London, 1923), pp. 143-4. This can be dated at 1862. Robert Ashley, Wilkie Collins (London, 1952), p.105. A.K.H.Boyd, Twenty Five Years of St. Andrews I (London, 1892), p.100. This recollection is from 1868. Percy Fitzgerald, The Garrick Club (London, 1904), p.79. Downey, Lever, II, p.227. From a letter written in 1868.

In the main, these are views of Trollope from people who did not know him well. There is no dearth of stories about his bearish manner and combativeness. The grand-daughter of James Ward, R.A., visiting Lord Lytton at Knebworth, probably in the sixties, obviously enjoyed this experience:

One day we were driving through Lord Cowper's fine estate of Panshanger, when we saw to our intense amusement Anthony Trollope about to have a fight with a broad-shouldered rubicund tradesman. Anthony had divested himself of his coat and was shaking his fists in his opponent's face, as he danced around him. Though we never heard which gladiator won, the betting was all on Anthony, who had gained a reputation for never risking defeat when he made a challenge.¹²

In 1873 among the Punch crowd, particularly with Shirley Brooks, "Anthony's thunder" was still to be heard.¹³ Julian Hawthorne found him in the mid-seventies "in his successful, glowing, gusty, gesticulating old age, most likeable."¹⁴

Here and there among the recollections there are reminders that beneath the extravert Trollope there was a shy and sensitive creature, although few but his most intimate friends could have known of the "recurrent moods of indefinable dejection and gloom"¹⁵

¹²Mrs. E.M.Ward, Memories of Ninety Years (London, 1924), p.147. Trollope settled at Waltham Cross in the winter of 1859, which is not far from Knebworth, where Mrs. Ward was then staying as the guest of Lord Lytton. We may infer that this memory dates from the sixties.

¹³G.S.Layard, A Great "Punch" Editor, Being the Life, Letters and Diaries of Shirley Brooks (London, 1907), p.526.

¹⁴Julian Hawthorne, Shapes That Pass, Memories of Old Days (London, 1928), p.135.

¹⁵Quoted Escott, p.170.

we perceive in his later letters. And it is strange to think of him writing to Millais of "some weakness of temperament that makes me, without intelligible cause, such a pessimist at heart."¹⁶ George Eliot obviously grew fond of him, while Henry James divined - perhaps more from his novels than personal acquaintance - the "great natural kindness" of the man.¹⁷ Percy Fitzgerald, sponsored by him for membership of the Garrick Club, decided that his boisterousness was a mask:

This manner of his always struck me as being somewhat affected, assumed to hide either shyness or a certain feeling of not being at his ease.¹⁸

James Payn had similar thoughts, and W.P.Frith writing after Trollope's death observed:

The books, full of gentleness, grace and refinement; the writer of them, bluff, loud, stormy, and contentious; neither a brilliant talker, nor a good speaker; but a kinder-hearted man and a truer friend never lived.¹⁹

Young people's admiration and respect for him is well documented by Thackeray's daughter, Laura Hain Friswell, and the charming

¹⁶ibid.

¹⁷Henry James, Partial Portraits, (p.102., ...).

¹⁸Fitzgerald, p.78.

¹⁹See James Payn, Some Literary Recollections (London, 1884), pp. 221-2; W.P.Frith, My Autobiography and Reminiscences II (London, 1887), p.335.

memorial tribute by Walter Herries Pollock.²⁰ Julian Hawthorne's remark is a fitting climax at this point:

Beyond a doubt, Anthony Trollope is something of a paradox.²¹

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We can divide Anthony Trollope's life story into five phases: his childhood; early manhood and beginning of his Post Office career; his work in Ireland, marriage and literary apprenticeship; the years of greatest success; and the final years.

Family life was immensely important to him as we can tell from the Autobiography despite his reticence about private matters. Disclosures of a personal nature struck a good many Victorians as shocking vulgarity.²² Certainly this is the impression one gets from Trollope's reaction to the first volume of Forster's Life of Dickens, but notice also his irritation at the breach of family loyalties:

²⁰ See Hester Ritchie ed., Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie (London, 1924), p.125; Laura Hain Friswell, In the Sixties and Seventies, Impressions of Literary People and Others (London, 1905), pp. 169-70; W.H.Pollock, "Anthony Trollope", Harper's Monthly Magazine (May, 1883), pp. 907-12.

²¹ Julian Hawthorne, Confessions and Criticisms (Boston, 1887), p.160. For another splendid tribute, see Frederick Locker-Lampson, My Confidences, an Autobiographical Sketch (London, 1896), pp. 331-7.

²² See, for example, Trollope's rebuke to Kate Field when she requested him for "copy" about George Eliot; Letters, 812, p.450.

Dickens was no hero; he was a powerful, clever, humorous, and, in many respects, wise man; - very ignorant, and thick-skinned, who had taught himself to be his own God, and to believe himself to be a sufficient God for all who came near him; - not a hero at all. Forster tells of him things which should disgrace him, - as the picture he drew of his own father, & the hard things he intended to have published of his own mother;²³

Thackeray's influence is felt here and one is reminded that Thackeray forbade a biography of himself.²⁴ As an example of Trollope's epistolary style, however, we may note the rapid terseness and genuine quality of human speech, and welcome its emphasis on family loyalties. Trollope seems to have grown steadily more convinced of the need to separate public and private life, perhaps as a means of preserving the humility and integrity which marked his career in public service and in letters.

The Trollopes, then, were a united and loyal family, proud of their name and lineage which went back to the fourteenth century. Tom Trollope remembered that their household in Bloomsbury included a liveried footman, despite their straitened circumstances.²⁵ Fanny Milton and Thomas Anthony Trollope married in 1809 and settled at 16, Keppel Street, within easy reach of her brother, Henry. It was an area inhabited by the professional classes, mainly lawyers. The Merivales lived at Red Lion Square, and Herman Merivale like Thomas

²³Letters, 490, p.291.

²⁴See Payn, Some Literary Recollections, pp. 232-3.

²⁵T.A.Trollope, What I Remember, I (London, 1887), p.4.

Anthony, struggled to make headway as a barrister. There was much open space in the neighbourhood, and Charles Merivale, later Dean of Ely, recalled that from Bloomsbury "one could get into the fields in a few minutes."²⁶ Nearby were the Long Fields, notorious for duels and vagabondage, mentioned by Thackeray in Henry Esmond and The Virginians. By 1835 Bloomsbury was a declining neighbourhood and later still we find Anthony using its environs as an indication of fallen circumstances of several characters. Long before this, however, in 1817 the Trollopes moved to Harrow. On the expectation of wealth from his uncle Meetkerke, Thomas Anthony leased four hundred acres and built a great house, - "the grave of all my father's hopes, ambition, and prosperity."²⁷ From now on the father's life runs down in a succession of tragic absurdities. Having muddled business arrangements over the marriage settlement and the deeds of the Keppel Street house, he was already in serious financial trouble when he took to farming for which he was not in the least suited. That he should have then staked all

²⁶ Autobiography and Letters of Charles Merivale, ed. Judith Merivale (Oxford, 1898), p.11. Artists as well had their quarters in Bloomsbury, notably Constable, who liked living in Keppel Street, between 1817-22 "like bottled wasps upon a southern wall." Quoted C.R. Leslie, Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, ed. J. Mayne (London, 1951), p.94.

²⁷ Anthony Trollope, An Autobiography, World's Classics (London, 1961), Ch. I, p.2. Quotations from Trollope's novels are from World's Classics editions where they have been available. In all other cases quotations have been taken from first editions, unless stated otherwise.

on the Cincinnati bazaar is the crowning absurdity. However one tries to sympathise with him the picture is of a dry, vain, ill-tempered failure - an unlovable man. To add to his miserable existence as a child, Anthony was short-sighted, which increased his shyness. Today it is well known that inability to see objects clearly can seriously hamper a child's development. At any rate Trollope refused in later life to let this particular handicap overcome him, riding hard at fences he could scarcely make out. Few men so justify Hemingway's observation that an unhappy childhood is the best training for a writer.

One other factor is of profound importance, the habit Trollope developed as he walked along the muddy Harrow lanes of making up stories. Surely here is the true foundation of his literary career. His day-dreaming filled the loneliness of his existence with friends to love and enemies to vanquish. Thousands of heroes and heroines must have grown in his mind, taking over the day-dream, with far-reaching effect on the kind of story he was eventually able to write. As Ernest Baker wisely said, once Trollope had realised what a person could do it was ascertained fact he could not falsify.²⁸ At any rate, the reality of the lives of his characters became a cardinal point of his literary theory, once amusingly exemplified by a conversation with Amelia Edwards:

²⁸ Ernest Baker, The History of the English Novel, VIII (London, 1938), p.121.

"Why did you let Crosbie jilt Lily Dale?" I asked Anthony Trollope one day.

"Why did I 'let' him?" he repeated. "How could I help it? He would do it, confound him!"

This was not said in jest. It was earnest.²⁹

Anthony's mother, on the other hand, was apparently a trojan. Testimony outside the family's shows her will-power, her courage and her energy. It was she who cultivated the friendships among influential men, brightening the Harrow days with gatherings of artists and politicians, well able by her wit and intelligence to hold her own in discussions. To Charles Lever she was a rather formidable woman of the bluestocking variety, but on acquaintance he found that her sense of fun made her company agreeable.³⁰ She had the energy and optimism of a young person even in later years. Meeting her mother-in-law, soon after the marriage, Rose Trollope was amazed at her being "always the life and soul of the party", even in her 64th year.³¹ From her Anthony seems to have inherited a love of travel, an indomitable will to survive, a refreshing candour and modesty about his work, and a love of society. The remarkable thing about her is that despite her globe-trotting Mrs.

²⁹ Amelia Edwards, "The Art of the Novelist", the Contemporary Review, LXVI (August, 1894), p.240.

³⁰ L. Stevenson, Dr. Quicksilver, The Life of Charles Lever (London, 1939), p.182.

³¹ F.E.Trollope, A Memoir of Frances Trollope, II (London, 1895), p.39.

Trollope kept the family united. When Anthony started at Winchester under Tom's wing shewrote to her eldest son:

I dare say you will often find him idle and plaguing enough. But remember, dear Tom, that in a family like ours, everything gained by one is felt personally and individually by all.³²

The Trollope family drew close in the face of the usual nineteenth-century calamities, the lingering deaths, and wretched farewells, the frightening illnesses - even the pantomime appearance of the bailiffs, which Frances Trollope turned to such account in Michael Armstrong, one of the best comic scenes she wrote. At first Henry, a sickly boy, who died at the age of 23, was her favourite. His death just before Christmas 1834 caused her to lean more heavily than she had ever done before upon her eldest son. She grew fonder of his company, and it seems natural that as Tom developed the sociable qualities her husband had lacked she should have attached herself to him more firmly. She chose to settle in Florence within her son's household from 1844 until her death in 1863 because her tastes in music, art, and society largely coincided with those of Thomas Adolphus. It is surely not uncommon for a mother to favour one son. Tom was undoubtedly much indulged, and Anthony was the odd man out in the family. This is strongly conveyed by the Trollope biographies with their constant references to Tom and his affairs,

³²ibid., I, p.95.

the conscience-stricken enquiries about Anthony, and the delegations implied by such statements as "My poor dear Anthony will have outgrown our recollection'." At the time of Henry's death she will write to dear Anthony "in a day or two, but cannot do it now."³³ His mother's absence in the years when he most needed her must have hurt Anthony more than all the other humiliations of his school life. But I doubt very much that his sense of justice and his compassion did not enable him to overcome his resentment. Evidence of happy reunions over the years and of the friendship between Rose and Anthony's mother leads me to suppose that accounts of resentment and hostility are exaggerated.

With his brother Tom he seems to have been on good terms always. The first-born son always enjoyed most privilege in nineteenth century family life. Where resources were limited the eldest son received the best education. Charles Merivale was quite reconciled to seeking his own fortune in India when the budget failed to allow him to attend the university. Anthony is not likely to have resented his brother's superior position; indeed, it was matter for jest. Sending a photograph to a relation in June, 1864, he wrote:

Here you have my brother and self. You will perceive that my brother is pitching into me. He always did.³⁴

³³ibid., p. 131, p.229.

³⁴Letters, 237, p.154.

As youths they were often together, walking, fighting and arguing. After a fourteen-mile walk to Vauxhall it was Anthony, noted for his clumsiness and shyness, who danced all night, not Thomas Adolphus. The ties became stronger as they grew older. Frances, Tom's second wife, describes the brothers taking long walks in Cumberland. Visiting Anthony in Ireland soon after his appointment which was the beginning of his new life, Tom was astonished at his poise, authority and well being. By September 1852 Anthony was writing to his mother

I can't fancy any one being much happier than I am, - or having less in the world to complain of. It often strikes me how wonderfully well I have fallen on my feet....³⁵

In his own autobiography Tom notes that once his brother had become a Surveyor's Clerk he was "one of the most efficient and valuable officers in the Post Office."³⁶ Perhaps the best account of the two brothers together came from Kate Field, seeing them amid the marble pillars, the armour and rare books of the Villino Trollope:

Here is Anthony Trollope, and it is no ordinary pleasure to enjoy simultaneously the philosophic reasoning of Thomas Trollope - looking half Socrates and half Galileo - whom Mrs. Browning called "Aristides the Just", and the almost boyish enthusiasm and impulsive argumentation of Anthony Trollope, who is an admirable specimen of a frank and loyal Englishman.³⁷

³⁵Letters, 32, p.16.

³⁶T.A.Trollope, I, p.257.

³⁷Lilian Whiting, Kate Field, A Record (London, 1899), p.396.

In the practical, resilient ways of his mother, Anthony forgot the past and conquered any tendency to self-pity, shyness and morbid self doubt, by driving himself towards the goals of security and public esteem. Seldom in adult life did he open the old wounds. But at sixty, when his reputation was on the wane, his mind, judging by the letters, seems to have turned increasingly to the past. He writes irritably, as though the past forced itself upon him, however much he clung to his daily tasks:

I never keep a letter. Any that are worth keeping as autographs & fit for that purpose are given away at once if there be any one near who want them, - or are destroyed.³⁸

The following year, when The Prime Minister was unfavourably reviewed, he had an unpleasant row with Charles Reade, which re-awakened a feud begun in 1872 when Reade had plagiarised Ralph the Heir for his play Shilly Shally. In this climate of setback and renewed anxiety about himself Trollope must have felt the need to exorcise those memories and, perhaps, set down his life so far to reassure himself and repair defences he had carefully built up through the years. He wrote the memoir, as men do write such things, to leave a true record of his achievements to posterity; but in an infinitely more important way the book was meant for himself, an assessment and justification of the way he had chosen to live.

³⁸ Letters, 601, p.345.

The circumstances of his childhood described in the first two chapters of the Autobiography are well known. They dwell on the social stigma of the family's poverty, on physical cruelty and, worst of all, Anthony's sense of utter loneliness. Escott accepted Trollope's view that he had over_stated his miseries in a diary from the age of twelve; a "friendless little chap's exaggerations of his woes."³⁹ That such experiences were commonplace in the Victorian period is true. Charles Merivale's experiences were remarkably similar to Anthony's and he recalled uncomfortable days among the pupils of Harrow.

Nevertheless I am bound to confess that the sense of social inferiority which was impressed upon me at Harrow was not only extremely distressing at the time, but left, I think, a certain self-distrust and shame-facedness which have often stood me in very bad stead in later life.⁴⁰

A later generation of Merivales, Herman Charles, was also lonely there:

Anthony Trollope had no worse a time at Harrow, for I was very wretched.⁴¹

Most children survived despite the educational system, and Anthony Trollope, of course, was one. But unlike the sons of John Herman

³⁹Escott, p.16.

⁴⁰Charles Merivale, Autobiography, p.43.

⁴¹Herman Charles Merivale, Bar, Stage and Platform, Autobiographic Memories (London, 1902), p.186. At Eton the situation was conceivably worse. See F.C.Burnand, Records and Reminiscences, I (London, 1904), Ch. VII.

Merivale he had additional problems to cope with; the absence of his mother, the uncertain temper of his nagging father, and the consequent instability of home life. Again, qualities of will and courage enabled him to hold on alone to some kind of hope for the future. In his father's dismal chambers at Lincoln's Inn he found amusement in a bi-columned Shakespeare. During the worst phase of his existence at Harrow Weald he escaped from his father's tuition in Latin to read part of Cooper's The Prairie. From first to last the story of Anthony's childhood is summed up in the words "outcast" "pariah" "absolute isolation".

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In autumn 1834 Trollope became a junior clerk in the General Post Office and took lodgings in London, where I am sure he continued his practice of dreaming romances, some of which seem to have merged uncomfortably with real life.⁴² Of his seven years in lodgings we know little, but it is not difficult to discern snatches of experience in novels such as The Three Clerks, Phineas Finn and Ralph the Heir.

The Roden-Crocker scenes in Marion Fay probably recall his London office experience, and who can doubt that behind this picture of Harry Clavering is the lonely post office clerk festering over his

⁴²See Autobiography, Ch. III, pp. 39-44.

over his idleness and want of purpose?

Has it ever been the lot of any unmarried male reader of these pages to pass three or four days in London without anything to do, - to have to get through them by himself - and to have that burden on his shoulder, with the additional burden of some terrible, wearying misery, away from which there seems to be no road, and out of which there is apparently no escape?⁴³

Details like this help us form an impression of the young Trollope that supplements the bald statements of the Autobiography. The picture is of a shy youth heavily built and rather clumsy, but with a certain gentleness of manner; perhaps Will Belton is the nearest to Trollope himself, but his qualities recur in many portraits, from that of Johnny Eames to Tom Tringle - "one of those overgrown lads who come late to their manhood."⁴⁴ But whatever the actualities of Trollope's adolescence, we can be fairly certain that the recollection of his follies bore fruit in authentic pictures of youth in his novels. And because he understood the youthful point of view he was able to present father-son relationships with remarkable insight and irony. Consider the relationship of Lord Cashel and Lord Kilcullen in The Kellys and the O'Kellys and the poignancy of that between the Duke of Omnium and Lord Silverbridge in The Duke's Children.

⁴³(1959)
The Claverings, ch. XXVI, p.273.

⁴⁴(1968)
Ayala's Angel, ch. VIII, p.71.

As Michael Sadleir pointed out, Trollope's removal to Ireland in August, 1841, was the real beginning of life for him. Twelve months after arriving he became engaged to Rose Heseltine, the daughter of a Rotherham bank manager, whom he married in June, 1844. Meeting^{her} was one factor in his maturing. Another was his promotion to Deputy Postal Surveyor, and, in 1845, Surveyor. The shy man always needs much encouragement to make his mark. Once Trollope had some status for all to see it gave him confidence and unleashed ferocious energy. Walking with John Merivale at Drumsna he was full of enthusiastic observation, which bore fruit in The Macdermots of Ballycloran written between 1843 and 1845. Now happily married, he became a family man with the birth of Henry Merivale in 1846 and Frederick James Anthony in 1847. When his mother came to Mallow he was delighted to see how well she and Rose got on together. Past sorrows were forgotten as they planned his literary future. F.E.Trollope has said that her mother-in-law approved of all she saw during that visit in her seventieth year. The whole tenor and promise of life at this time is so significant to Trollope's development that I wish to enlarge on Trollope's Irish experiences in Chapter Six.

In the letters of the early fifties the note of confidence sounds clearly and ^{there is} even an element of impatience at the slow progress of his career. He writes to his mother in September 1852 that a kinsman, Sir John Trollope, is using his influence on his behalf:

But I ought not to want any private interest. The more I see the way in which the post-office work is done, the more aggrieved I feel at not receiving the promotion I have a right to expect. However, this does not really annoy me...⁴⁵

In November of the same year he approached the Earl of Hardwicke, the Postmaster General, unsuccessfully for the post of Superintendent of Mail Coaches. He had grounds for his ambition, having proved himself a valuable public servant: thorough, dedicated and efficient. Among his achievements was a study of postal arrangements in Jersey in November, 1851, which brought about the use of pillar boxes.⁴⁶

With the emphasis on Trollope's careers as public servant and novelist it is easy to overlook the role of his wife, Rose. Sadleir refers to the amity of their married life which to my mind is based on agreement as to the mutual spheres of man and woman - the ideal in so many of his novels.⁴⁷ Rose not only took an active part discussing his stories, copying manuscripts, and proof-reading, but also showed herself an admirable housewife and mother. She was clearly a homely soul, never happier than when "settled peaceably among her pigs and poultry."⁴⁸ Anthony himself loved his garden.

⁴⁵Letters, 32, p.16.

⁴⁶When modern square pillar boxes were introduced in this country in 1968 tributes to Trollope's pioneering were paid in the form of letters posted to his descendants.

⁴⁷I discuss this subject at length in my fourth chapter, "The Bread and Cheese".

⁴⁸Letters, 161, p.102.

and home. "How is the garden," he asks wistfully from Ireland towards the end of his life, "and the cocks & hens, & especially the asparagus bed."⁴⁹

But for all her homely traits Rose was also mettlesome and attractive. Her mother-in-law was so fond of her that she gave Rose a brooch which had once belonged to Princess Metternich. We can infer something of her feminine quality, surely, in Trollope's many literary insights into female psychology. But as a factual instance of her liking for plenty of attractive clothes we have evidence that she teased her husband by taking vast amounts of luggage when they travelled abroad.⁵⁰

In marriage and family life Trollope found the true metal of experience and I am discussing his personal life at such length because from his fulfilment and happiness in this sphere comes the best of his simple faith in human nature and the core of his fiction. At home Trollope seems to have been the ideal Victorian paterfamilias with few qualities of a Podsnap or a Pontifex. Perhaps his jovial domineering was a reaction to the chilly authoritarianism of his own father. Writing to his brother he assumes a likeable bearishness:

I am glad you are to have a child. One wants some one to exercise unlimited authority over, as one gets old

⁴⁹Letters, 887, p.482.

⁵⁰For a complimentary reference to her appearance in 1877 see Augustus Hare, In My Solitary Life, ed. M. Barnes (London, 1953), p.106.

and cross... One's wife may be too much for one, and is not always a safe recipient for one's wrath. But one's children can be blown up to any amount without damage, - at any rate, for a considerable number of years. ⁵¹

This quotation shows that Trollope saw married life in a very realistic way, recognizing the need for compromises and allowances for bad temper. Indeed, so frequent are the scenes of marital conflict in his novels, that we can assume Trollope enjoyed a very normal marriage. However, the dominant impression is of contentment, well expressed in this letter to G.H.Lewes in April, 1861:

I have daily to wonder at the continued run of domestic & worldly happiness which has been granted me; - to wonder at it as well as to be thankful for it... no pain or misery has as yet come to me since the day I married; & if any man should speak well of the married state, I should do so.⁵²

Towards his family Trollope showed much devotion. Unlike Dickens, who seems to have been disappointed in his sons, Trollope took much pride in their careers. No one reading the letters can miss his affection for them. Of his younger son, Frederick, whose emigration to Australia at the age of 18 proved a great heartache to him, he wrote in January, 1875: "If he dont succeed in the long run I can no longer believe in honesty, industry and conduct."⁵³

⁵¹Letters, 33, p.17.

⁵²Letters, 138, p.88.

⁵³Letters, 568, p.330.

He provided £4,000 for Frederick's sheep farming and visited him twice for long periods. To his elder son he showed the same benevolent interest, assisting him to a partnership in the firm of Chapman and Hall at the end of 1869. If Harry disappointed him by staying with Chapman less than four years, he soon reconciled himself to the fact that his son would fashion his own career. He lived to see him attain a moderate success in various fields of writing, from a book on sociology to translation and literary criticism. Quite apart from pleasure in his son's literary endeavours, Anthony Trollope's greatest satisfaction came in Harry's election to the Athenaeum in February, 1882 - "by 204 votes to 4" he writes, "I have not heard of so overpowering a majority."⁵⁴ The letters written towards the last days of his life are full of pathos as he follows his son's career. Anthony Trollope's interest in the whole family was simply an expression of the clan-nish spirit inherited from his mother. His orphan niece, Florence Bland, became a member of the household from 1863 and acted as his secretary until his death. Nor can one forget the devotion Trollope showed to Tom's daughter 'Bice' and his sorrow at her death.

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⁵⁴Letters, 866, p.473.

The years of Trollope's greatest success came in the decade *daring* from 1858/59. It is hard to credit the phenomenal activity of the man at this time. In the sixties he had 20 novels, either appearing, published, or ready for publication, as opposed to 13 in the seventies. A total of 27 works can be counted in the sixties, compared with 22 in the following decade - not to mention the journalism of that period.

The breakthrough came in Thackeray's acceptance of Framley Parsorage for the first issue of the Cornhill Magazine in January, 1860. For a man of Trollope's nature, as I have said earlier, it only needed some sign that he was indeed a bigger man than he felt for his creative talent to burst through in a torrent. In terms of his public service career, this had happened with his promotion in Ireland. Now his literary stature was recognized. The result was the most varied and productive decade of his life. Among the ventures into which he threw his prodigious energy were the founding of the Pall Mall Gazette (1865), the editing of St. Paul's Magazine (1867), and a special mission to the United States for the Post Office (1868). In 1861 he became a member of the Garrick Club, and in 1864 of the Athenaeum. The formal accolade of celebrity - the portrait in oils, came in 1864 when he sat for Samuel Laurence. But not even a strong man as Trollope undoubtedly was could maintain this pace for more than a few years. One senses a feeling of anxiety behind the exhilaration of his letter from Glasgow to Lewes in May, 1865:

Enjoying myself! revising a post office with 300 men, the work and wages of all of whom are to be fixed on one's own responsibility! Come & try it, & then go back to the delicious ease & perfect freedom of your Editors chair! ⁵⁵

Two years later Trollope was to discover that the freedom of an Editor was not quite so attractive. Meanwhile he continued to demand a tremendous amount from his own physique. In January, 1864, while at Bury to give a lecture, he got up at 6 a.m. in order to hunt 30 miles away. Not even work schedules were allowed to deter him from his sport. As Henry James tells us, even a return voyage from the Antipodes was timed to coincide with the hunting season.⁵⁶ In June 1865 he was approached for advice from a junior member of the Post Office who was impatient at his slow promotion:

Such a condition is very common with men of energy, and such men must then decide whether they will begin the world again by placing themselves where a higher career may be open to them (in which there is always risk), or whether they will accept the moderate and sure advantages which they already possess.⁵⁷

If his correspondent decided to remain in the Post Office, Trollope concluded, he must rid himself of a sense that his gifts were not properly recognized. This was one factor in his own resignation two

⁵⁵Letters, 264, p.166.

⁵⁶James, Partial Portraits, p.125.

⁵⁷Letters, 269, p.168.

years later. Another was a deterioration in his physical condition and morale. Among his multifarious activities he began in 1866 a history of fiction, which he abandoned because he had reached a point when he could not undertake any more literary labours. Lewes had to give up editorship of the Fortnightly towards the end of 1866, and Trollope, shy and conservative as he was, did not care for new men. He was most apprehensive at the arrival of John Morley in the editor's chair for the issue of January 1867.

The mid-sixties are marked by an extraordinary amount of change and experiment as Trollope tested himself in a variety of roles. It was as if he had to prove to himself that he had finally conquered all the disabilities of his youth. This was a motive in the anonymous publication of Nina Balatka, 1866-67, and Linda Tressel, 1867-68. His editorial ventures were part of the same psychological drive: to show the world he could do just as well as Dickens and any other writer, editor, proprietor. If he could not do something well he was distressed, or relieved his feelings by a sudden outburst, sometimes of anger, more often of laughter. He played golf badly, and staying with the Blackwoods in Scotland he kept his ego intact and other guests amused by "hamming" his way round the course.⁵⁸

However, at the prosperous height of his career, Trollope had all that had been denied in childhood - money, social status,

⁵⁸ Mrs. G. Porter, Annals of a Publishing House, John Blackwood, III (London, 1897), p.197.

and friends. His income looked assured, and his family life was thoroughly equable amid the pleasant surroundings of Waltham. His popularity now erased the memories of loneliness at school and home, when "I coveted popularity with a coveting which was almost mean."⁵⁹ Now friends and admirers sought him out. After Thackeray's death in 1863 he moved into a central position at the Garrick as chairman of the Committee. He undertook the job of Treasurer of the Royal Literary Fund and was active on its behalf for many years. His generosity, outside this body, extended to giving personal aid to the widows of Robert Bell and Shirley Brooks.

Trollope had an astonishing range of friends. Painters, professors, peers of the realm, most of the literary figures of the time, and professional men of all kinds, figure among his correspondents. Trollope, more than Dickens, favoured the society of the well-born, although he was not at all snobbish. He found in the society of the aristocracy and upper class the code of gentlemanly virtue which I wish to show in my final chapter is the basis of his approach to standards of public life. Mainly through the clubs Trollope knew many men in political life, notably Arthur Russell, the nephew of Lord John Russell, and the Hon. Frederick Leveson Gower, said by Escott to have been a source of material for Trollope's political novels. Leveson Gower was an indolent, witty, good natured and not

⁵⁹Autobiography, Ch. 1, p.14.

too intelligent member of that Venetian oligarchy as Disraeli called the most powerful Whig family in the country - all of which appealed strongly to Trollope. As the brother of Earl Granville and, one gathers from his memoirs, an incurable gossip like his kinsmen, the Grevilles, he had a fund of anecdotes about the aristocracy and parliamentary figures which must have delighted Trollope when they met at the Athenaeum or later at his third club, the Cosmopolitan.⁶⁰

These were the days when Trollope may be said to have justified the Johnsonian accolade of being a very clubbable man. In June, 1862, with William Longman he was guest at a meeting of the Alpine Club at the Castle Inn, Richmond. Sir William Hardman, the very type of English country gentleman in Trollope's novels, recorded that he made a good speech.⁶¹ Trollope was not a witty conversationalist in an age when conversation was still highly prized in the circles he now moved in. He was not at home in the salons, preferring the masculine atmosphere of the clubs, where his rumbustious manner gave him a security and confidence that was less easily breached. Charming and gallant to the ladies, but with his own insight into their peculiar gifts of intuition, Trollope

⁶⁰ The Honourable F.L. "Freddy" Gower was one of a large class of M.P.s whose chief interest in going up to the House was to collect their mail. He confessed in his charming memoirs, Bygone Years (London, 1905), that he seldom spoke in a debate in 33 years. His brother, on the contrary, the second Earl Granville, held cabinet posts in several Liberal administrations.

⁶¹ Ellis, A Mid-Victorian Pepys, p.144.

may have fought shy of their company. An unknown female diarist noted this charming comment:

"I understand, Mr. Trollope, your knowing what a young gentleman and a young lady say to each other when they are alone together; but how can you possibly know the way that two young ladies talk to each other while brushing their hair?" Mr. Trollope only laughed and said: "It's not by listening at the keyhole, I assure you!" ⁶²

Bluff, manly Englishmen like Hardman were his chosen company. He felt safe with them and they were content to take him at his own estimate - or rather, they were perhaps not capable of perceiving his inner doubts and insecurity, for which he overcompensated by a "rather loud but genial laugh" which he traded on as he grew older. ⁶³

In his biography of Sir William Hardman, S.M.Ellis observes "The older he became the harder he worked."⁶⁴ This was true of Anthony Trollope as of many Victorians. Labor ipse voluptas is a true motto of the age. Amidst his editorial duties, he saw his brother's books through the printers and must have engaged in a massive task of reading, both for his contemplated history of fiction and for his political novels. He also manfully buckled to that burden of the successful novelists - reading his friends' manuscripts. In the early days of success he was asked to judge Kate Field's bad poetry. "Ah me," he wrote, "It gives me such pain to write this...

⁶² Author unknown, The Notebooks of a Spinster Lady, 1878-1903 (London, 1919), pp. 74-5.

⁶³ Sir Algernon West, One City and Many Men (London, 1908), p.169. See also, B. and P. Russell, editors, The Amberley Papers, II (London, 1937), p.27.

⁶⁴ Ellis, Preface, v.

I too have written verses, and have been told that they were nought."⁶⁵ Trollope was a kind-hearted person, and hated to inflict pain. Once Kate had shown that she was made of rather harder material than Trollope had perhaps allowed himself to think at the start of their friendship he greeted her efforts with more frankness: "In spite of Dogberry, the thing is to be done by cudgelling... The end of your story should have been the beginning."⁶⁶

Sadleir dates the turn in Trollope's fortunes at the end of 1866 when he threw in his lot with James Virtue, a sound printer but an inexperienced publisher. At this time he was uncertain about his future in public service, and by 1867 uncomfortably occupying the editorial chair of Virtue's new magazine. Adverse criticism of his novels was on the increase. This in itself would not have mattered, but with other factors it contributed to a loss of confidence. Signs of a drop in sales were apparent, and after the peak prices obtained for Phineas Finn and He Knew He Was Right Trollope was forced to bargain adroitly in the next decade to keep his price. An unpleasant jolt also occurred when The Vicar of Bullhampton was forced to take second place to a novel of Victor Hugo's in a publishing arrangement. On top of this insult Trollope's excursion

⁶⁵Letters, 162, p.104.

⁶⁶Letters, 375, p.217.

into scholarly fields was greeted in 1870 by sneers. As Herman Merivale put it, the Dean, his uncle, received Trollope's new book and replied with placid brevity "'Thank you for your Comic History of Caesar.'" Trollope wept.⁶⁷

But by far the greatest disaster was his failure at Beverley. Standing for Parliament was in many ways the ultimate goal in Trollope's ambition to forget the past, redeem the family honour as it were, and guarantee his social status. If, as the American Eric Hoffer has said, every Englishman wants to be a squire, part of the dream for Anthony Trollope was to be elected in the Liberal interest:

most

It is the highest and legitimate pride of an Englishman to have the letters M.P. written after his name. No selection from the alphabet, no doctorship, no fellowship, be it of ever so learned or royal a society, no knightship, - not though it be of the Garter, - confers so fair an honour.⁶⁸

Dickens, drily surprised, found Anthony's ambition "inscrutable".

Still, it is the ambition of many men; and the honestest the man who entertains it, the better for the rest of us, I suppose.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, Dickens could not overcome his abhorrence of the political arena: "Its irrationality and dishonesty are quite shocking."⁷⁰ I disagree with Escott's view that Trollope's Westminster ambitions had nothing much to do with being useful, - a

⁶⁷ H.C. Merivale, Bar, Stage and Platform, p.96.

⁶⁸ Can You Forgive Her? (1953), Ch. XLV, p.54.

⁶⁹ T.A. Trollope, II, pp. 128-9.

⁷⁰ ibid., p.127. Further discussion on Trollope's political aspirations

strange conclusion for one who had seen countless examples of Trollope's integrity and energy. Dickens's remark with its stress on honesty is nearer the truth. I need only note Trollope's genuine disappointment over Beverley. When he wrote to Sir Arthur Helps in January 1869, he wistfully referred to his work in a humbler sphere:

With me, it often comes to me as a matter, I will not say of self-reproach but of regret, that I can express what I wish to express only by the mouths of people who are created - not that they may express themselves, but that they may amuse. You have gained your laurels after a more manly fashion.⁷¹

This is a consistent reaction I find to his political failure.

From about this time the letters begin to show more melancholy tones, and although he is in his fifties he already begins to feel old. The punishing work routine is scarcely slackened, but the novels include those of a more satirical cast like The Eustace Diamonds and The Way We Live Now, and more intricate studies of psychological stress and confusion. His own restlessness is apparent from the increased amount of travelling which scarcely yields him the satisfaction he needs, although it produces three books. From Australia in February, 1872, he writes to the Leweses:

and theories forms a major part of my final chapter.

⁷¹Letters, 398, p.236. Although Trollope is referring to Sir Arthur's elevating discourse he may also have had in mind his correspondent's role in public affairs.

I am beginning to find myself too old to be 18 months away from home. Not that I am fatigued bodily; - but mentally I cannot be at ease with all the new people and new things.⁷²

Writing outside the demands of his daily quota becomes an increasing burden. Mary Holmes had been a friend of Thackeray's, and after his death Trollope inherited her as a correspondent. Her solemn questions about his novels must have taxed his patience at times:

When I have done my daily work, ... I have always a certain number of letters to write, which are de rigueur. Then I am tired of my pen, - often indeed sick of it; and cannot get myself to write more.⁷³

Used to her friend's asperity by this time Miss Holmes kept up the correspondence with a will. One of Trollope's replies manages a kind of desperate gaiety: "In all your letters there is ever so much that I should like to answer, - only there would be no end."⁷⁴

With the gradual fading of his reputation and the realisation that he was failing in health Trollope entered the last phase of his career towards the end of the 1870s. New tastes in literature had sprung up and he had no longer the will to adapt. As he wrote to his wife on the way to Ceylon in the spring of 1875: "... the world has had enough of everything, and there is nothing left but rechauffes."⁷⁵ Hunting had finally to be relinquished in 1878,

⁷²Letters, 490, pp. 290-1.

⁷³Letters, 624, p. 355.

⁷⁴Letters, 634, p. 359.

⁷⁵Letters, 585, p. 337.

another blow, and ailments of one kind or another produced the self-pitying tone of several of the later letters. He was bothered by the family complaint of slight deafness, hernia, writer's cramp and general fatigue. This above all made him fear for the future. He wrote to his son, Harry:

Nothing really frightens me but the idea of enforced idleness. As long as I can write books, even though they be not published, I think that I can be happy.⁷⁶

Like Tennyson's Ulysses Trollope strongly felt how dull it was to pause, how impossible to make an end, and his restless spirit took him during the seventies to Australia (1875) for the second time, South Africa (1877) and Iceland (1878). Like Ulysses he found no peace; the further shore continued to recede. The Phoenix Park murders in May, 1882, took hold of his imagination and proved to him that something near the end might yet be done. He went twice to Ireland against family wishes and medical advice and further weakened his heart, at last dying of a stroke on December 6, 1882.

To complete this picture of the novelist there is little to add to Sadleir's summing up of Trollope's personality. The British bulldog was Trollope's mask. As he described his photograph once:

It looks uncommon feirce [*sic*] as that of a dog about to bite; but that I fear is the nature of the animal portrayed.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Letters, 804, p.446.

Memories of the young clumsy, grumpy and ill-favoured character between leaving school and finding himself appreciated in a career and as an individual in Ireland, were consciously rejected. He found a mask, as we all do, and a personality suited to propensities within himself developed. Thus he genuinely appeared to those who knew him, Henry James for example, as "a sturdy and sensible middle-class Englishman".⁷⁸ And his novels verified that impression of solid, good-natured commonsense, and of traditional and unspectacular quality, which Nathaniel Hawthorne expressed in his well known roast beef analogy. The qualities evident in Trollope as a writer and as a man were those Victorian public schools professed and which provided dominance in world affairs, the prosperity of the country and made the pax Britannica a vital force for a hundred years. One of the key terms is "manliness" which Trollope describes himself as so conspicuously lacking as a boy! Manliness is important to everyone in the nineteenth century. Dickens uses the word a great deal, and it is everywhere in Trollope. It is a difficult word to define because it contains almost as much as that other favourite word of Trollope's, "gentleman".⁷⁹ Obviously it concerns ideas of virility, courage, leadership, the

⁷⁸James, Partial Portraits, p.122.

⁷⁹For full discussion on this point with reference to Trollope's The Life of Cicero see my final chapter, pp. 279-320.

hearty handshake and robust good fellowship. For Trollope it has to do with masculine pleasures: riding to hounds, whist at the club, a good mouth filling oath on occasion, smoking a cigar when the ladies have gone up, and enjoying a Lafite when it appears on the table. These are attributes which easily become philistine. The hearties were apt to gather together and snigger over Swinburne. But within the term 'manliness' there are subtler qualities: a chivalric sense of honour, fidelity of behaviour in all walks of life, and a high degree of true feeling. It was of course quite appropriate for men to feel deeply enough about something to shed tears. Trollope was not given to false sensibility, and did not wear his heart on his sleeve, but he could be deeply affected, and many of his manly characters weep copiously. In these extravert characteristics Trollope was typical of his generation.⁸⁰

But they were deepened by qualities of sympathy, understanding and intuition, derived from the circumstances of his childhood over which he triumphed. Certainly he learned persistence in early life which colours his whole method of working and his love of activity as an antidote to destructive brooding. As he wrote to Rose in February, 1858:

Do not be dismal if you can help it - I feel a little
that way inclined, but hard work will I know keep it
off.⁸¹

⁸⁰ When George Smith, delighted with the success of the Cornhill Magazine, offered to double Thackeray's salary as editor, the novelist ~~burst~~ burst into tears. See Leonard Huxley, The House of Smith, Elder (London, 1923), p.71.

⁸¹ Letters, 60, p.40.

Thus the compulsive attitude to work which Cockshut sees in the light of a self-destructive quality is on the contrary a liberation for Trollope, as for many of his contemporaries. "There is nothing like an opus magnum for thorough enjoyment of life."⁸²

It is true that Anthony confessed to his brother that he envied him the capacity for being idle, but the evidence is overwhelmingly towards the satisfaction he had from work. Inward insecurity, shyness, intermittent despondency, driving ambition for position and financial stability, were all in some way the result of his childhood unhappiness. But the important fact is that Trollope developed the equipment to combat his deficiencies and to capitalise on the virtues that adversity had produced: tolerance, geniality, and a breadth of view, which compensates by range of understanding for what the novelist lacks in power of imagination revealed in Dickens or in intellectual subtlety shown by George Eliot.

Trollope's life story is of a man who has come through, a worthy man with far less of the smugness which sometimes accompanies success stories of this kind. There is always a danger of succumbing to an atmosphere of smugness noticeable in the Victorian age, but Trollope is saved from this by and large through humility, and a power of perspective arising from his early experience. It is this diamond

⁸²Letters, 511, p.303.

hard quality which gives some of the novels almost a Flaubertian objectivity. It prevents his social comedy becoming flaccid and trivial even though, as he says, in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that he is writing of ordinary events in the most ordinary way. It makes him at times a subtle analyst of motive within the framework of ordinary human affairs.

The overall impression I retain from studying Trollope's life is of a man in whom qualities of gentleness and warmth are uppermost. Consider this response to George Smith who had just sent him a present:

No one is more accessible to a present than I am.
I gloat over it like a child, and comfort myself
in school hours by thinking how nice it will be to
go back to it in play time.⁸³

The pathos behind this sentiment with its recollection of the isolation of his childhood is the true voice of Trollope. Equally representative is the heartfelt sorrow at the death of Harriet, wife of Leslie Stephen, when the duty of writing to her sister, Anne Thackeray, seems so great a responsibility that he can hardly bring himself to think of suitable phrases. The result of bracing himself to the task is a model of simple affection.

With the emphasis on the "dark" Trollope in recent years there has been a tendency to think of him, particularly in the last decade

⁸³Letters, 109, p.71.

of his life, as more sombre than he was. A favourite expression which he used in many novels was that a character's "lines had lain in pleasant places." This was eminently true of his own life. His depressions of the last years were largely of the sort that stem from the physical ailments of old age, doubly painful to a man of Trollope's abundant energy. There are many witnesses to testify to the joy he showed in living right up to the end. The characteristics of the novelist in his prime are well conveyed in the memory of a friend for a series of word portraits of the famous published in 1887.⁸⁴ Trollope would arrive at a house. There would be a thunderous knock, and his resonant voice would be heard asking who was at home. His favourite stance was thus described:

Standing with his back to the fire, with his hands clasped behind him and his feet planted somewhat apart, the appearance of Anthony Trollope, as I recall him now, was that of a thorough Englishman in a thoroughly English attitude. He was then, perhaps, nearing sixty, and had far more the look of a country gentleman than of a man of letters.⁸⁵

The predominant impression this witness had of him was of his energy. When he talked he gesticulated and threw himself into the topic, trailing his coat, looking for an antagonist. When he listened he gave his undivided attention, with a searching look at the speaker,

⁸⁴ Mabel Wotton, ed. Word Portraits of Famous Writers (London, 1887), pp. 313-6.

⁸⁵ ibid., p. 315.

which could be disquieting. In anger, as George Smith knew, he could be alarming.⁸⁶ An aged staff member of Chapman and Hall Ltd. recalled that Trollope's clamorous arrival at the office struck terror in his heart.⁸⁷ Rowland Hill's daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Smyth, shrank from the sound of that stentorian voice which made the room seem too small for him:

Indeed, he reminded us of Dickens's Mr. Boythorn, minus the canary, and gave us the impression that the one slightly-built chair on which he rashly seated himself during a great part of the interview, must infallibly end in collapse, and sooner rather than later.⁸⁸

In many ways Trollope was a stock type, with at least bodily and facial resemblances to several of his contemporaries - Hardman, for example, who once posed for Watts as Henry the Eighth, or Tom Taylor. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, once people had come to know Trollope a little, they discovered, as Sir Henry Rider Haggard did, that he concealed a kind heart under a rough manner. Even Yates, whose view Sadleir, I think, under-estimates, could not believe "that any man of his time was more heartily, more thoroughly, more unselfishly charitable;"⁸⁹ Millais wrote of his

⁸⁶ Huxley, The House of Smith, Elder, p.104.

⁸⁷ Arthur Waugh, A Hundred Years of Publishing, Being the Story of Chapman & Hall Ltd. (London, 1930), p.87.

⁸⁸ Eleanor C. Smyth, Sir Rowland Hill, The Story of A Great Reform (London, 1907), pp. 277-8.

⁸⁹ Edmund Yates, His Recollections and Experiences, II (London, 1884), p. 229.

death to another old friend, Sir William Howard Russell:

... is there one word necessary from me to say what I think of the man we have both lost? "Fill up the ranks and march on" - as Dickens said when he heard of Thackeray's death - is the spirit in which I pass on to other subjects. ...⁹⁰

If his novels took on more sombre colourings in the last few years this was in response to a more complex age, and even the later novels have plenty of gaiety in places. Ayala's Angel, discussed in Chapter Three, has some comic scenes as buoyant and energetic as any he wrote, and the old man, Sir Thomas Tringle, is full of gusto and warmth beneath the carapace of his hard business attitude. The optimism of his middle years was inevitably toned down, but was abundant enough still concerning human nature and the gradual betterment of his society. Certainly there are grounds for thinking of him as a cheery soul in private life until the end. As he wrote to Alfred Austin around 1876:

I observe when people of my age are spoken of, they are described as effete and moribund, just burning down the last half inch of the candle in the socket. I feel as though I should still like to make a 'flare up' with my half inch. In spirit I could trundle a hoop about the streets, and could fall in love with a young woman just as readily as ever; as she doesn't want me, I don't - but I could.⁹¹

⁹⁰ J.B. Atkins, The Life of Sir William Howard Russell, II (London, 1911), p. 317.

⁹¹ Letters, 911, pp. 495-6.

And there speaks Millais' "dear old Trollope", with the indomitable family spirit, imbued with self-knowledge and the iron core of commonsense. This precious quality was, as I have tried to explain, the product of a life-time's duty, practice and discipline. The message of the Autobiography is plain enough, that in his case misery and isolation drove him into a search for love, friendship and security. The pressures and dreams of his own society reinforced those needs. The goals were achieved, and were not ashes in the mouth. It was a fairly conventional Victorian suffering, service and success story, after all. And yet there is a unique quality in the man's pen, which comes from the qualities of his love and reflection. And this at once takes him out of the ranks of the philistines or the diehards, the ranks of the mealy-mouthed churchmen, the tediously respectable bourgeoisie, and the bored denizens of the salons and clubs. He has a bohemian streak like Thackeray: "One is patriotic only because one is too small & too weak to be cosmopolitan."⁹² He thumbs his nose at grundyism, adulation of the sovereign, toadying to wealth and rank. He is not afraid to put truth before friendship, although he hates to give pain; but fidelity to friends is put before social convention, as is proved by his loyalty to George Eliot and G.H. Lewes in the

⁹²Letters, 173, p. 118.

time of greatest trial. Typical of his attacks on cant and humbug is his letter to an unknown critic of the Glencora-Burgo relationship in Can You Forgive Her?

Thinking as I do that ignorance is not innocence I do not avoid, as you would wish me to do, the mention of things which are to ^{me} be more shocking in their facts than in their names.⁹³

In an age of crushing prudery he skilfully interweaves with his plots the pressing social issues of marital infidelity, mental cruelty, prostitution. These are part of life which it is his business to record truthfully, and which in his duty as a novelist (and this he senses much more highly than his casual statements imply) he wishes to see remedied. Thus, in so many ways, Trollope transcends the image of the typically middle class hunting squire. One thing, however, stands out boldly from this consideration of Trollope the man, and it is his strength of character. Perhaps this is best appreciated by the memorable reflection of Sir Walter Raleigh, who observed after an evening's reading of a Trollope novel: "I wish there were a Trollope movement, it would be so healthy."⁹⁴

⁹³Letters, 280, p.174.

⁹⁴Lady Raleigh ed., The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh, 1879-1922, I (London, 1926), p.272.

Chapter Two

TROLLOPE'S REPUTATION

"It is to be feared that Trollope's
books are dead"

- Herbert Paul,
the Nineteenth Century
(May, 1897).

I suggested in my opening chapter that Trollope's career and character proved more complex than at first appeared, and were partly responsible for the failure of critics to arrive at a truly satisfying account of the man. A similar problem surrounds Trollope's reputation and his views on writing, and again appearance has tended to mask his aims and achievement. It is this aspect of the Trollope "problem" I now wish to consider.

On the face of it there is no mystery. The facts of his rise and fall have been set out by Michael Sadleir and others, and may be covered quite briefly. He reached a pinnacle of fame with the valedictory Barsetshire novel published in 1867. After losing ground slightly he recovered his popularity with The Eustace Diamonds which was published in 1872. But as Sadleir said, he was too obviously a star of an earlier epoch to the restless younger generation of the seventies. The Way We Live Now (1875) puzzled the older group of readers and was hardly given a fair trial by the new. Then The Prime Minister (1876) encountered such reproach,

notably in the Spectator, Trollope woefully records, that it seemed to him that his work should be brought to a close.¹

One should not exaggerate this decline; it was inevitable for a writer who had enjoyed popularity for so long, and whose books had commanded somewhat over-inflated prices. A reaction was inevitable, but was it as catastrophic as Sadleir made out? At his death, the story goes - almost over night - Trollope's reputation fell and his public disappeared. Then came the Autobiography, which condemned him to oblivion. This is the legend of Trollope's fate.

It is difficult to reassess the accepted account of a man's fame. So much may depend on a mistaken emphasis in the history books, an arbitrary quotation from an unreliable source, a misinterpretation of an eye-witness's account. Even when a figure is close to us like Sir Winston Churchill, for example, one version of a single event can create a legend future historians will have difficulty disentangling.² The biographer writes his own life as well as his subject's. How much harder, then, our task becomes when the

¹ Autobiography, Ch. XX, p.309. Trollope wrongly suspected R.H.Hutton's authorship; the review was by Meredith White Townsend. See R.H. Tener, "The Spectator Records, 1874-1897", Victorian Newsletter (Spring, 1960), 17, p.35.

² Rolf Hochhuth's play, Soldiers, caused a furore in 1968-9, because it implicated Sir Winston Churchill in the death of the Polish war-time leader, General Sikorski.

subject died so long ago. Trollope has been less fortunate than either Dickens or Thackeray in the accretion of legend, despite attempts by Henry James, Frederic Harrison and a few other notable critics and writers to set the record straight.³ Paul Elmer More read Sadleir's Commentary and wondered at its tone of apology.⁴

For Michael Sadleir unwittingly played a part in perpetuating the legend of Trollope's downfall - not merely by his apologetic tone, but by tacit agreement with some misleading versions of the novelists' disrepute. Sadleir believed that Trollope was well-nigh forgotten by the winter of 1882, and that from the further shore the author sentenced himself to oblivion. This view exaggerates the case. We must consider several factors in judging Trollope's "oblivion" - not least Sadleir's own literary tastes and the evidence he used.⁵

³One such legend was that Trollope was unread. See James Payn, Some Literary Recollections, pp. 221-2. Trollope was a thorough bookman and kept a fine library. See The Catalogue of his Books (privately printed, 1874) in the Forster Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum; G. Smalley, "English Men of Letters", McClure's Magazine, XX (Jan. 1903), p. 299; Lance Tingay, "Trollope's Library", Notes & Queries, CXCIV (28 Oct. 1950), pp. 476-8.

⁴P.E. More, "The Demon of the Absolute", New Shelburne Essays, I (Princeton, 1928), p. 90.

⁵Compare later editions of his Commentary in which he toned down hostile references to the Edwardians. See over, pp. 58-9.

In my first chapter I suggested that Trollope died a happy, fulfilled, and prosperous man. The result of his labours (to John Caldigate, published in 1879) he regarded as "comfortable, but not splendid";⁶ if we reflect on this typically understated remark and translate the sum of £70,000 into comparable present day terms, it represents some half a million pounds.⁷ My first point is that Trollope scarcely thought of himself as hard done by in his late years when the public very naturally turned to James, Hardy and Robert Louis Stevenson - the ^{last} ~~latter~~, at least for a time, an admirer of Trollope. Writing from Paris in February, 1878, he told his parents:

Do you know who is my favourite author just now? How are the mighty fallen! Anthony Trollope. I batten on him; he is so nearly wearying you, and yet he never does; or rather, he never does, until he gets near the end, when he begins to wean you from him, so that you're as pleased to be done with him as you thought you would be sorry ... what a triumph is Lady Carbury! That is real, sound, strong, genuine work: the man who could do that, if he had had courage, might have written a fine book; he has preferred to write many readable ones.⁸

This comment clearly shows the puzzlement, grudging admiration, and irritation Trollope aroused in the younger artists. Stevenson was

⁶Autobiography, Ch. XX, p.314.

⁷An estimate given to me by Mr. Richard Sadleir on 13 March, 1969.

⁸The Letters of R.L.Stevenson, ed. S. Colvin, I (London, 1911), p.226.

twenty-eight. The public were turning from Trollope and negotiations with his publishers were more difficult, but he was still to be reckoned with. Among his last books - his "late romances" as they might be called - are some of his most vigorous and characteristic touches, which some critics recognized and to which the public responded well.

Speaking of Trollope's decline we must therefore think of it first as a fall from extraordinary eminence and popularity. All the obituaries testify to this. Richard Littledale in the Academy, a periodical unsympathetic to middlebrow fiction, called him the most representative figure of contemporary literature, and one who had achieved the almost rarer distinction of becoming an object of personal goodwill to his uncounted readers.⁹ There was no one, said Viscount Bryce in the Nation, so representative of English fiction both by his books and by his living personality.¹⁰ The Month, reviewing Trollope's Autobiography, noted that scarcely any English novelist during his lifetime had been more deservedly popular.¹¹ It tends to be forgotten that the creator of Mrs. Proudie and Plantagenet Palliser succeeded to Dickens' place in public regard, at least so

⁹The Academy, XXII (16 Dec. 1882), p.433.

¹⁰The Nation, XXXVI, 914 (4 Jan. 1883), p.10.

¹¹The Month, XLIX (Sept.-Dec.)1883, p.484.

far as middle class taste was concerned. For many indeed he represented, more than the creator of *Pickwick*, the strength, sanity, and all round worthiness of the British way of life. As gentleman and squire, impeccable householder, and unquestionably self-made man he fulfilled so many ideals of the period. Trollope was to be seen on public platforms as some sort of laureate of the popular novel.¹² When a paralytic stroke felled him The Times made an announcement, following it with almost daily bulletins, so great was public concern for one who had mirrored their lives for so long.

All novelists undergo a period of neglect, and those who stay close to the social issues or manners of their age are particularly vulnerable to the condescension of the next generation.¹³ In the case of one whose work and standards were so thoroughly rooted in Victorian ideals the obloquy was bound to be severe. This is the point Sadleir obviously wishes to emphasise. A tide of new attitudes swept Trollope aside. To Sadleir a breed of "young exquisites" as he calls them, learning decadence, amorality, or "the stark grammar of unflinching fidelity to fact" rejected Trollope absolutely:

¹² Among many public speaking engagements in the late sixties and seventies Trollope responded to the toast of Literature at the dinner for Charles Dickens on 2 Nov. 1867.

¹³ For comment on this and Trollope's reputation see Percy Fitzgerald, Memoirs of an Author, Reminiscences of the Literary World, I (London, 1894), p.174.

the verdict of an age of intellectual snobbery and economic restlessness, of an age which found beauty in abnormality, which despised contentment and quiet friendliness, which - because subversiveness was due to be the chic - thrived on disgruntlement and judged complacency the deadliest sin.¹⁴

Sadleir continues in this strain, arguing that the Autobiography with its "aggressive horse-sense of his views on life and book-making" sealed Trollope's fate:

Then it was that affectionate depreciation became malevolent hostility; then did the tempest of reaction against his work and against all the principles and opinions it represented break angrily and overwhelm him.¹⁵

Oddly enough he warns us to guard against period prejudice and falls into the trap himself.¹⁶ His own failure to understand the eighties and nineties is like that of so many critics who greeted Zola, Crane, Moore with howls of bewildered rage. Is it art? asked H.D. Traill of Morrison's naturalism. Is making mud pies an artistic occupation?¹⁷ Many failed to see the humane social concerns or the integrity in the arts at the turn of the century, and bandied such epithets as hideous, hopeless and pornographic around the names of Ibsen, Hauptmann, and the novelists of slum life. Clearly in Sadleir's vituperative comments, is an over-reaction, which needs careful scrutiny.

¹⁴ Commentary, p.363.

¹⁵ ibid.

¹⁶ So does P.E. More attacking surrealism in "The Demon of the Absolute", p.40.

¹⁷ H.D. Traill, The New Fiction and Other Essays (London, 1897), p.5

Lewis Melville said in 1906 that Trollope had suffered the worst fate possible for an artist: he had not been abused after his death, he had been ignored.¹⁸ Sadleir no doubt knew this essay of Melville's. Indeed he quotes Melville's phrase "a chronicler of small-beer" ascribing it to Richard Garnett, although it does not appear in Garnett's portrait of Trollope for the Dictionary of National Biography. And to judge from the sources Sadleir used in his assessment of Trollope's posthumous reputation he absorbed a very one-sided view. For example, he quotes William Tinsley, the publisher, at the start of his introduction to an edition of the Autobiography in 1923, as saying: "No one reads or thinks about Mr. Trollope's novels now" [1900].¹⁹ And it was Tinsley who encouraged the story that "as soon as death stopped his prolific pen, the author and the books died almost at the same time."²⁰ There is a decidedly condescending tone here that verges on dislike, and it may be that Tinsley spoke a shade vindictively. There are spokesmen enough at this time of opposite conviction, and signs of a revival in the early years of the century in various re-publications of Trollope's work both in England and America. Another dismal voice Sadleir would have known was that of Herbert Paul who commented

¹⁸Lewis Melville, Victorian Novelists (London, 1906), pp. 168-9.

¹⁹William Tinsley, Random Reflections of an Old Publisher, I (London, 1900), p. 136.

²⁰ibid.

in the May, 1897 issue of the Nineteenth Century that twenty years ago half the novels on a railway station bookstall would have had Trollope's name on them. "Now his books are never seen there, and seldom seen anywhere else."²¹ But all the same there must have been many like Frederic Harrison still enjoying Trollope, even though the Autobiography had been long out of print.²² Other leading critics too had written favourably about the man and his books, but somehow it was the legend promulgated by men such as Tinsley, Melville, and Paul which took root. Neglect certainly fell to Trollope's lot as it has done to every writer, but it does not seem to have been as total and dramatic as we have been led to believe. There is no case for describing it as "oblivion", merely as a period of disregard which I should be inclined to see as occurring between 1890 and the turn of the century.

This is what we can infer from the evidence of reprints and cheap editions. In 1899 The New Century Library put out an edition of the Barsetshire novels. John Lane embarked on their "New Pocket Library" series in 1902, which had reached ten volumes by 1907. Lane's eight-volume Barset edition followed in 1928. Blackie & Son

²¹ Herbert Paul, "The Apotheosis of the Novel under Queen Victoria", the Nineteenth Century, XLI (May, 1897), p.783.

²² Frederic Harrison, Studies in Early Victorian Literature (London, 1895), p.201.

published Barchester Towers and Framley Parsonage in 1903-4. G. Bell & Sons and Everyman's Library issued the Barset series between 1906 and 1908. In America wholesale piracy went on. The Royal edition of Barsetshire novels was published in Philadelphia in 1901 and other issues were put out by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York and the "Manor House series" in 1906. Trollope seems to have suffered no eclipse in the United States, perhaps because Americans were perennially drawn to his world of dukes and encumbered estates. At any rate the appreciations of his work were numerous. Gamaliel Bradford Junior in the Atlantic Monthly of March, 1902 welcomed the Trollope revival; and in the same journal almost a year later Edward Fuller said: "Once again ... his name creates a stir of interest."²³ In England G.S. Street, Leslie Stephen and Viscount Bryce wrote appreciatively of Trollope in the early years of the century. F.G. Bettany's article "In Praise of Anthony Trollope" in the Fortnightly Review of June, 1905 was followed in December, 1906 by T.H.S. Escott's welcoming of Trollope's "present revival".²⁴ And to show he had well and truly arrived - The Times Literary Supplement for 9 September, 1909 devoted its front page to Trollope.

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²³"The Re-coming of Anthony Trollope", the Dial (Chicago), XXXIV (1 Mar., 1903), pp. 141-3. The Atlantic Monthly, LXXXIX (March, 1902), pp. 426-32, and XCI (Feb., 1903), p. 272. Also see The Bookman (N.Y.), XIII (Apr. 1901); XXI (Apr. 1905); XXIII (Apr. 1906); XXIX (Mar. 1909).

²⁴Fortnightly Review, LXXVII (June, 1905), pp. 1000-11; and LXXX (Dec.

"To be unknown to Mudie is to be unknown to fame." Thus spake The Times of 23 May, 1859.²⁵ This remained true for another twenty-five years while the great circulating library and book-selling business expanded and dominated British middle class reading habits. It is interesting to note, in connection with The Times comment on Mudie that it places Trollope in a most exalted position and despite some ponderous irony is more sympathetic to the novelist than the following quotation suggests:

This majestic personage [Mudie], whom authors worship and whom readers court, knows that at the present moment one writer in England is paramount above all others, and his name is Trollope. He is at the top of the tree; he stands alone; there is nobody to be compared with him.²⁶

The influence of Mudie's Select Library is, of course, well known, and it seems appropriate therefore to relate the question of Trollope's downfall to the activities of this remarkable institution.

Dr. Norman Gardiner has listed Mudie's holdings of work by Anthony, Thomas Adolphus, and Frances Trollope, taking sample counts roughly at ten-year intervals between 1848 and 1935.²⁷ This yields some useful information provided it is accepted with some caution.

1906), pp. 1095-1104. See also Lance Tingay, "Trollope's Popularity: a Statistical Approach", N.C.F., XI, 3 (Dec. 1956), pp. 223-9.

²⁵ Charles Edward Mudie founded the Select Library in 1842. By 1860 the enlarged premises in New Oxford Street were a centre of literary life. It was popular with middle-class families because, as J. Hain Friswell noted, most of the fiction stock had "in its conception a noble end", "Circulating Libraries", London Society, XX (Dec. 1871), p. 523. See also Guinevere L. Griest, "A Victorian Leviathan: Mudie's Select Library", N.C.F., XX, 2 (Sept. 1965), pp. 103-26.

²⁶ The Times (23 May, 1859), p. 12.

²⁷ Norman Gardiner, unpubl. diss. "A Critical Study of the work of

For example, one has constantly to relate any findings to the history of the Library as a business venture. Anthony Trollope apparently reaches the peak of popularity in 1900 with 52 titles; but at the same time 71 of Charlote Yonge's novels are listed, 92 of Mrs. Oliphant's, and 100 of Emma Marshall's. The business was then in its most expansionist phase. Similarly, a dramatic fall in the 1935 figures is a matter of Mudie's decline rather than Trollope's. To help overcome factors of this kind I have examined holdings in 20 novelists from recognized classics to the best-sellers of the moment, and my findings are set out in the Appendix on p. 321.

The Library's clientele raises questions which also complicate the issue. Trollope's references to Mudie's subscribers in the late Victorian period show them to be the affluent, educated middle-class. It will be recalled that Lucy Dormer, bereft of her father also loses a comfortable South Kensington home in which Mudie's unnumbered volumes arrived like hot rolls for breakfast.²⁸ Towards the end of the century Mudie's clients must have covered a wider social spectrum and may well have left Trollope's books to a band of impoverished gentlefolk, devouring instead the vast numbers of romances

Frances Milton Trollope" (London, 1969), Appendix E, p.328.

²⁸ Ayala's Angel (1833), ch. II, p.11.

from the pens of Jules Verne, Baroness Orczy, Edgar Wallace and Marie Corelli. It is impossible to know which books were read but such shrewd businessmen would not have kept unread books taking up valuable shelf space. Arthur Mudie kept his eye on the market; popular authors like Julia Kavanagh, Anne Manning and Elizabeth Sewell are dropped once their appeal has failed. Trollope, on the other hand, is always prominent in the lists.

This result from examining the Mudie catalogues makes one doubt that Trollope's eclipse was anything like so great as Sadleir's account suggests. My listing of twenty authors shows that Trollope remained a commercial investment for Mudie for at least 70 years. Acknowledged masters such as Scott and Dickens show little variation in demand from year to year. Lytton too, even in the 1930s is stable, and so is Disraeli. Compared with Reade, Whyte Melville or Lever in terms of "highs" and "lows" in books available in the fiction catalogues, Trollope stands out for fairly consistent popularity over a long time. Considering the period from the late 1850s to 1935, Marryat (who belongs to an earlier era) fares badly: he is represented in 1935 by only 10% of his best year's holdings. Lever does better with 20%. Others register: Whyte Melville, 25%; Reade, 33¹/₃%; Collins, over 50%. Trollope comes below Collins with about 40%, but this is a remarkable level, considering his enormous output.

Perhaps the most significant factor of this investigation is Trollope's staying power. The queens of the circulating library reign very briefly by comparison. Mrs. Cliphant, for example, dropped from over 90 titles in 1900 to 4 in 1935, and Miss Braddon, from 75 in 1920 to 6 in 1935. The more notorious pair, Rhoda Broughton and Ouida, fell more swiftly from public view. Mrs. Henry Wood, on the other hand, lasted well, as did the writers of historical romance, G.P.R. James and Ainsworth.

Without being too dogmatic about these findings one can assume that Trollope's novels were being read during the years when he is supposed to have been quite forgotten. Just as at each decade of his so-called oblivion there have been men like Harry Furniss, who told Tennyson of rediscovering Trollope in the mid-1880s,²⁹ so his books held their place in Mudie's, outlasting each new star - from Katharine Macquoid to Conan Doyle, from Rafael Sabatini to P.G. Wodehouse.

Encyclopaedias also provide comparative evidence of Trollope's survival. Although they confirm Sadleir's contention about the part played by the Autobiography in reducing his stature, they make it clear that the novels are by no means lost and forgotten. The Encyclopaedia Britannica for 1888 pointed out that it was the sheer quantity of novels which prejudiced readers, long before any revelations

²⁹ William Allingham, A Diary, ed. H. Allingham and D. Radford (London, 1907), p. 487, 342.

about his methods made the prejudice worse. By 1910 the Britannica was inclined to be more severe: only the Barsetshire novels would last. But by 1929 the first Trollope revival was well under way and even the Irish novels were found to contain some merit. By 1938 the Encyclopaedia Britannica welcomed "a striking revival" in appreciation for this novelist. But notice particularly how little variation there is in the space allotted to the novelist - from 1833 to 1910 almost three columns, some 214 lines. In the 1929 and 1938 editions there are about two columns, some 150 lines. Chambers' Cyclopaedia did not alter its favourable verdict on Trollope between 1876 and 1892, but criticised him in 1903 for his lack of taste and intellectual reach. Even so it found much to praise in "the readableness and essential healthiness of his best work", his "shrewd eye for certain aspects of life" and for his gift of character-drawing.³⁰ The space allowed Trollope by Chambers' Cyclopaedia drops very slightly from five and three-quarter columns in 1876 to five in 1892; by 1903 there are six columns and a picture. However, this does not in fact represent an increase in matter, since a larger type has been used. A vast American work, Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature (1897-98) placed Trollope between two giants - Tolstoy and Turgenev. He was represented by two novel excerpts and a section entitled "The Moral Responsibility

³⁰ Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature, III, ed. D. Patrick (London, 1903), p.487.

of the Artist", taken from the Autobiography, which shows that not everyone misunderstood his views on writing. Edmund Gosse perhaps had the right answer to this posthumous hand Trollope had taken in his own downfall. "It is a mistake," said Gosse, "to explain in too matter-of-fact a way how these things are done."³¹ This may be so but the point is arguable. It may be true that the public prefers an artist mysterious and remote and cannot tolerate the idea that he works like a clerk and hopes to earn a great deal of money. Again, it may be said with equal justification that the public likes to know about the lives of eminent figures. Trollope, who all his working life had been the most reticent of men, was suddenly news with the publication of the Autobiography, and judging from the number of periodicals which chose to review it one might have expected a short boom in the novels of such a remarkable man. In fact this sort of enquiry can lead us nowhere: the critics already knew how Trollope worked, and the public for the most part was past caring. In my opinion the tale of Trollope's reputation being extinguished by the Autobiography is as much a literary mare's nest as the story that Keats was snuffed out by a review. Trollope's short period of neglect occurred, as W.F. Lord suggested in The Mirror of the Century, 1906, because the world in which he lived had passed

³¹ English Literature, An Illustrated Record, IV, ed. Edmund Gosse (London, 1903), p.321.

away. Herbert Paul declared him dead beyond all hopes of resurrection³² in 1902, but in the same year Leslie Stephen corrected him: it was merely a matter of "suspended vitality".³³ It was only a few years indeed, before Hugh Walker's appreciative article on Trollope in The Literature of the Victorian Era. The World's Classics editions of Trollope poured on to the market in the twenties and thirties, a period which is marked by several tributes to the novelist. It is noteworthy that Oliver Elton's A Survey of English Literature in 1920 put George Eliot and Trollope in Chapter XXIII (Volume Two) and the seven pages devoted to Trollope are far from negligible.

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I have been dealing so far with public response to Trollope's indiscretions in the Autobiography. What did the critics feel about them? Sadleir is definite about this: the book roused a tempest which overwhelmed him. This does not seem to have been the case. Disapproving growls came from the Graphic of 20 Oct., 1883, which grumbled that just because Trollope could write in railway carriages he laid down the untenable proposition that novel writing was like boot-making, demanding little but assiduity and daily work.

³²Paul, "The Apotheosis of the Novel", p.783.

³³Leslie Stephen, Studies of a Biographer, IV, c. 11 (London, 1903), p. ~~321~~ 169.

He would have been fairer to his publishers had he brought more critical judgement to his work before selling it. Macmillan's Magazine (the writer is probably Frederic Harrison) began a very appreciative article by objecting to Trollope's "needless crudity of phrase" in such remarks as one about preventing a publisher from going to "another shop" for his wares. But most criticisms of this sort were swamped by all kinds of praise. Even the Graphic had to admit his "truly wonderful gift" while the Macmillan's review mentioned above said:

Many a scribe will denounce Trollope's practice as base and mechanical, whose own best writing is a long way below Trollope's worst. The truth is that some of the greatest writers on the gravest subjects, men of the rank of Gibbon and Macaulay, have been as regular and as punctual in their work as Trollope was.³⁴

The Atlantic Monthly waxed bolder on the theme of waiting for the moment of inspiration:

Think of that, unhappy littérateurs, who wait for the mood and weave a Penelope's web, tearing up every night the unsatisfactory pages of the day!³⁵

The Westminster Review also approved of Trollope's workmanlike methods, pointing out that the novelist occupied a position midway between Johnson and Macaulay.³⁶ The Edinburgh Review found no

³⁴The Graphic, XXVIII (20 Oct. 1883), p. 391; Macmillan's Magazine, XLIX (November, 1883), pp. 54-5.

³⁵The Atlantic Monthly, LIII (February, 1884), p. 271.

³⁶The Westminster Review, LXV (new series) (Jan. 1884), p. 108.

fault on the score of Trollope's business attitudes, but censored him for offering such an enticement to young men. He had made the work sound so easy and attractive that young people would want to devote themselves to what was after all an idle amusement for idle people. Trollope was not to be taken as an example - "physically and morally, he was a remarkably strong man."³⁷ Blackwood's Magazine also worried about young writers trying to do what Trollope had done.³⁸ By and large the journals did not object to Trollope working in the way he had chosen, begging the question as to whether more revision might have produced better books. Only The Times whispered that his work might have been improved if he had not been so doggedly determined.³⁹ Some critics, however, accepted Trollope's contention that he could not have produced better work by more fallow periods. The Saturday Review, for example, was convinced that he had evolved the best technique for his own genius: "He worked, as he played, with his whole heart."⁴⁰ And there is much to be said for this kind of approach to the debate on Trollope's writing habits.

³⁷"The Literary Life of Anthony Trollope", The Edinburgh Review CLIX (Jan. 1884), p.187.

³⁸Blackwood's Magazine, CXXXIV (Nov. 1883), p.596.

³⁹The Times (13 Oct. 1883), p.8.

⁴⁰The Saturday Review, LVI (20 Oct. 1883), p.506.

The critics seem to have recognized and applauded Trollope's type of creative mind; what they did not like was his forthright expression about it. The Graphic observed, for example, that it was not necessarily a property of genius to be erratic and unbusinesslike.⁴¹ The Times marvelled at Trollope's Napoleonic "five o'clock in the morning genius."⁴² Many writers, of course, practised in private exactly what Trollope preached, only they lacked the courage to admit it.

In any case Trollope was by no means unique. Scott had written by the clock. Zola's motto "Nulla dies sine linea" was also Trollope's, and Zola, too, wrote to a length, and would throw down his pen even in mid-sentence, able to resume next day because the subject was so much in his mind. Dickens and Lytton kept fairly closely to regular hours of work and wrote quickly. Writing to order and at speed seems to have been common among Victorian men of letters. It was part of the professionalism and hard work the age so much admired. As Gertrude Himmelfarb said in Victorian Minds their appetite for work was astonishing. Leslie Stephen excelled in the ease and regularity of his writing, at one time averaging three or four 8,000 word articles per week.⁴³ Indeed,

⁴¹The Graphic, XXVI (16 Dec. 1882), p.661.

⁴²The Times (7 Dec. 1882), p.6.

⁴³Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (London, 1968), p.212.

Trollope's own capacity for "quick roasting" had produced Framley Parsonage and brought him fame through his association with the Cornhill Magazine. His liking for working at high speed is undoubtedly an important element of a type of literary psychology, which is as viable as the slower, reflective kind. Professor Cockshut has called this an eccentricity, but I should have thought it was a common factor in nineteenth century social philosophy. In his travels Trollope obviously revelled in opportunities to set down his observations "hot on to the paper".⁴⁴ As a London critic, reviewing the book on South Africa in the New York Herald noted: Trollope had much of the special correspondent in him, and without jotting down notes as he went along, like other writers of travel books, wrote his impressions almost on the spot. The critic added "you cannot read ten pages without seeing that the book is substantially, essentially accurate and true."⁴⁵

But it was not merely a matter of the writer's psychology. Trollope's "capacity for grinding" as he called it in his essay on Thackeray, was also a matter of physical strength. This too was understood by his contemporaries and is often mentioned. Michael MacDonagh's amusing essay, "In The Throes of Composition" (the Cornhill Magazine, November, 1904), refers to Anthony's inheritance

⁴⁴ Autobiography, Ch. VII, p.112.

⁴⁵ The New York Herald (4 Mar. 1878), p.6.

from his mother - the same "high spirits and good health."⁴⁶
 Equipped with the right temperament and physical strength
 Trollope could keep to a regimen that few could emulate. His
 journey to South Africa in 1877 when he was 62 involved hardships
 that would have felled many a traveller.⁴⁷ It was his strength
 and mental capability which led him to make dogmatic assertions
 about writing as a matter of application and self discipline,
 which so irritated later generations. A typical remark of this
 kind was noted by Donald Macleod in Good Words, 1884. "Genius,"
 he once said to us, "is but another name for the length of time
 a man can sit!"⁴⁸ He genuinely felt this to be true and was rather
 inclined to gloat about it.

However, as I have said, the majority of critics in the
 1880s did not condemn Trollope. There can have been little shock
 value in what he said of his literary methods. The London literary
 world was a small one still and there can have been few writers
 and critics unaware of Trollope's views on the practice of his
 trade. What surprised them was what he revealed about his childhood.
Blackwood's found the details "almost too painful" while the

⁴⁶The Cornhill Magazine (New Series), XVII (Nov. 1904), p.610.

⁴⁷See the Graphic, XXVI (16 Dec. 1882), p.661.

⁴⁸XXV (1884), p.249.

Spectator asked over and over again, how could this wretched boy have become the man we knew and loved? Even to people who had known him over a long period, like Sir William Gregory, these personal details came as a complete surprise; but many knew how the Trollope treadmill had kept on turning. As early as 1860 he had told his friend, Catherine Gould:

I believe that the profession requires much less of what is extraordinary either in genius or knowledge than most outsiders presume to be necessary. But it requires that which all other professions require, - but which outsiders do not in general presume to be necessary in the profession of literature, - considerable training and much hard grinding industry - My belief of book writing is much the same as my belief as to shoemaking.⁴⁹

James Russell Lowell marvelled in 1861 at Trollope roaring over the dinner table like Dante's Cerberus about going to work on a novel "just like a shoemaker on a shoe, only taking care to make honest stitches."⁵⁰ On another occasion Trollope was asked by a lady at dinner if he believed in inherited genius. Leaning over to Cuthbert Bede he whispered "I believe much more in cobbler's wax."⁵¹ Bede's reminiscence of the author in the Graphic, of 23 Dec. 1882, gives a perfect illustration of Trollope's physical capabilities and the speed at which he worked. Once Bede was a guest at a country house where Trollope was breaking his journey

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Letters, 86, p.57.

⁵⁰

Horace E. Scudder, James Russell Lowell, A Biography, II (London, 1901), p.82.

⁵¹

Cuthbert Bede, "Some Recollections of Mr. Anthony Trollope", the Graphic, XXVI (23. Dec. 1882), p.707.

to Casewick, the home of his cousin, Sir John Trollope.⁵² The date must have been early spring 1868 as Bede tells us that soon afterwards Sir John was created Lord Kesteven, and that the novelist was correcting an article on the Irish Church for St. Paul's Magazine. When Bede left at about 11 p.m. Trollope was playing whist, retiring to bed in the small hours. They met next morning for breakfast at half past nine, and Trollope said cheerfully that he had risen at five. After a hearty breakfast he spent all day hunting and then dined at another country house. More late hours were followed by the same early rising next day and the same patient toil. It gave him, said Trollope, a clear conscience so that he could enjoy his recreations.

The cobbler's wax theory, then, was well known in literary circles, and a favourite topic whenever Trollope sat down to dinner. He used it for a variety of reasons besides the genuine wish to think of his profession in a normal businesslike way, as the letter to Catherine Gould suggests. He used it to deflate pomposity and to fend off dilettantes and tiresome admirers in the way suggested on p. 75 and it must be admitted that he used it to protect himself from close critical scrutiny that might damage his confidence.

⁵² John Trollope, first Baron Kesteven, M.P. for S. Lincoln 1841-68; President of the Poor Law Board 1852; custos rotulorum for the Soke of Peterborough, succeeded his father as seventh Baronet, 1820, and was created Baron Kesteven of Casewick, co. Lincoln, 14 Apr. 1868. He died on 17 Dec. 1874. Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage, 104th edition, (London, 1967), p. 2512.

It was both an honest attempt to preserve a commonsense outlook and a way of disarming his more transcendental fellow artists. Of course this is by no means rare among writers; one thinks of D.H.Lawrence's rejection of Bloomsbury aesthetes, or George Orwell with his conscious Woodbine. The story of Trollope at one of George Eliot's celebrated afternoons is an instance of this particular use of the mask. Trollope was haranguing the guests about his factory methods, when George Eliot observed that there were days when she could not write a line. Trollope then directed a comment against himself:

"Yes! ... with imaginative work like yours that is quite natural; but with my mechanical stuff it's a sheer matter of industry. It's not the head that does it - it's the cobbler's wax on the seat and the sticking to my chair!" ⁵³

By such under-valuing of his work Trollope threw dust in the eyes of future critics.

** ** **

When the Autobiography appeared the Saturday Review hoped it might dispel an atmosphere of "discredit" occasioned by "some unwise books" of late.⁵⁴ Sadleir, unfortunately, allowed them to cloud his judgement of Trollope's decline, and he gives the adverse

⁵³Harrison, Studies in Early Victorian Literature, p.203.

⁵⁴The Saturday Review, LVI (20 Oct. 1883), p.505.

critics undue weight, as we have seen. However, Trollope himself took to heart several blows in the latter part of his life - the criticism of The Prime Minister, the failure of his scholarly attempts with The Commentaries of Caesar (1870) and The Life of Cicero (1880). He was deeply mortified by being the target, also, of cartoons and personal jibes. However, these are a feature of the jaded atmosphere of dying Victorianism, and from another point of view the lampoons and sketches in the seventies argue that Trollope was still highly regarded. Much in demand at social gatherings in the seventies Trollope was a frequent speaker on Women's Education, Literature and other topics. Yet Sadleir fastened on the comments of insignificant figures like J. Hain Friswell - "Frizzle" as he was called - whose Modern Men of Letters Honestly Criticised (1870) is as mealy-mouthed as the title suggests. One of Friswell's more ludicrous observations was that Trollope was "a man one would hardly choose to confide in."⁵⁵

The worst of the cartoons was Sir Leslie Ward's in Vanity Fair (1873) which portrayed a wild, hairy figure with opaque discs for eyes. The accompanying text was most offensive.⁵⁶ Ward had persuaded James Virtue, the publisher, to let him meet Trollope

⁵⁵ Friswell, p.138. He also wrote novels, edited the Censor and contributed to several journals. His Footsteps to Fame: A Book to Open Other Books (London, 1861) added to the self-improvement manuals so popular at the time. Friswell was also an ardent social worker particularly for the Ragged Schools.

⁵⁶ Vanity Fair, IX (5 April, 1873), pp. 110-11; see also Sir Leslie

at his home. After he had seen the cartoon Trollope scolded Virtue who in turn sent an angry letter to the artist. One person who enjoyed the joke, at any rate, was Edmund Yates. He promptly commissioned Ward to do a series of drawings for the World. A sense of Trollope's contempt for this level of journalism can be gained from the Lady Carbury scenes with her friends Alf, Booker and Broune in The Way We Live Now. Trollope began this novel less than a month after the Vanity Fair incident.

From incidents of this kind Sadleir made inferences about Trollope's downfall, tending to bypass the favourable reviews, articles and the tributes at Trollope's death. He cites, for example, Yates's "waspyish" article in the World, but it should be remembered that Yates later defended Trollope from A.K.H. Boyd's criticism in Twenty-Five Years of St. Andrew's.⁵⁷ Sadleir also thought The Times obituary unfair, although the writer, possibly Mrs. Humphry Ward, calls Trollope "the most methodical romance writer of whom we have heard," and praises "the wonderful uniformity of quality in each of his novels."⁵⁸

Ward, Forty Years of 'Spy' (London, 1915), pp. 104-6.
 Other cartoons appeared in Once A Week (1 June 1872);
Punch, LXXX (5 Feb. 1881), p. 58. A parody of a Trollope novel
 called "The Beadle! or The Latest Chronicle of Small-Beerjester
 by Anthony Dollop" ran in Punch between 5 June and 16 Oct. 1880.

⁵⁷ The World,^{xxxvi} (24. Feb. 1892), p. 19.

⁵⁸ The Times (7 Dec. 1882), p. 6.

In fact nearly all the obituaries give the dead man generous credit although Sadleir denies this, taking only the Saturday Review as a fitting memorial. Naturally the emphasis is on the author's personality - his geniality, love of fellowship, and his energy being mentioned several times. People felt they had lost an old friend, said Richard Littledale in the Academy, and more than one writer spoke of the shyness and sensitivity beneath his rough manner. R.H. Stoddard's tribute in Harper's Weekly took up more space than obituaries of Archbishop Tait and Louis Blanc, and praised Trollope's Shakespearean power of divining character.⁵⁹ De mortuis nil nisi bonum was a favourite motto of Trollope's, but these tributes are neither eulogy nor half-hearted respect; many of them ring with genuine sadness, warmth and vitality. Nor just because they are largely from men who knew him are they devoid of frank criticism. This is how the various judgements appear:

Probably no English writer of his day has amused Englishmen so much as Mr. Trollope, or has given them that amusement from sources so completely free from either morbid weaknesses or mischievous and dangerous taints ... (Spectator)

[One who has given] more innocent amusement and entertainment than any other writer of this generation (Dublin Review)

⁵⁹ Academy, XXII (16. Dec. 1882), p.433; Harper's Weekly, XXVI (16 Dec. 1882), p.805.

wholesome and innocent mental pleasure... (the Graphic)

his worst work is better than a great many people's best... (Macmillan's Magazine)

[Slope, Crawley, Mrs. Proudie] are as much part of our general consciousness as the leading personages of Dickens or Thackeray... (Academy)

at his best in kindly ridicule of the approved superficialities of life... (Athenaeum)

[Barsetshire novels] one of the most complete and true pictures of English life in our age... (Good Words)⁶⁰

Reviews of the Autobiography were similarly appreciative, but more detailed.

What Sadleir obviously missed in them, which he found in the Saturday Review article referred to above, was a sufficiently high estimate of Trollope's achievement. His novels, the journal had said, showed "an instinctive revelation of life which delighted the most fastidious critic" as well as ordinary folk.⁶¹ The other periodicals would not place Trollope as highly as the Saturday Review did. They would have agreed with Viscount Bryce in the Nation - as Trollope would have himself - that although he was not in the first rank, he stood at the top of the second, conspicuously above Miss Braddon, Payn, Whyte Melville and Black.⁶²

⁶⁰The Spectator, LVI (20 Oct. 1883), p.1574; "The Novels of Anthony Trollope", the Dublin Review, IX (Apr. 1883), p.314; the Graphic, XXVI (16 Dec. 1882), p.661; Macmillan's Magazine XLVII (Jan. 1883), p.240; Academy, XXII (16. Dec. 1882), p.433; the Athenaeum, 2876 (9 Dec. 1882), p.773; Good Words, XXIV (1883), p.143.

⁶¹The Saturday Review, LIV (9 Dec. 1882), p.755.

⁶²The Nation, XXXVI (4 Jan. 1883), p.10.

They also pointed out, however, that in/certain areas he surpassed Dickens and George Eliot. They agreed to a man that he would prove to be a goldmine for later historians, and that no one had bettered his rendering of contemporary manners. The Barsetshire novels were his finest achievement and he had created characters destined to live.

This was to be the standard view of Trollope for the next fifty years, and it was summed up by Saintsbury in his Corrected Impressions when he called him an amuseur.⁶³ Today we give him more credit for investigating human nature than those of his age who saw him merely as a faithful social historian. We grant him more psychological awareness and we recognize a greater satirical spirit at work beneath the surfaces of his world. We see his representative quality, not as commonplace, but as rare balance amid the shifting ground of Victorian progress and discovery. We begin to perceive the artistry now that the myth of his hasty composition and cavalier attitude to literary excellence is in process of being destroyed. But within the conventions and expectations as to literature of the Victorians can we accuse them of belittling him? Surely not. They gave him his due, for the most part, magnanimously, because

⁶³G.L.Saintsbury, Corrected Impressions, Essays on Victorian Writers (London, 1895), p.174. Unlike Sadleir I do not find much change of opinion in the later article, "Trollope Revisited", in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association (Oxford, 1920).

in many ways he was the ideal novelist of the period, as I suggest in the ensuing chapters. As one admirer expressed it in a poem:

He was not wont, as many others use,
The noble life of Letters to abuse;
Its darker ways and works he did not choose.⁶⁴

The course of Trollope criticism until quite recently has been to stress the optimism and humour of Trollope, with emphasis falling on the chronicles of Barsetshire. That this is the legitimate source of pleasure is everywhere apparent, and is borne out by the fact that major Trollope revivals have occurred in the two world wars. The Archbishop of York in 1945 was said to have nominated Trollope for first place in wartime British reading popularity.⁶⁵ V.S.Pritchett described Barsetshire as one of the great Never-Never lands of our time - "the normal country to which we all aspire."⁶⁶

Good chronicler of Barset, weaver of genial yarns,
Homely and unaffected as the verse of the Dorset Barnes,
When the outlook is depressing, when journals bleat and scare,
I turn to your kindly pages and find oblivion there.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Mowbray Morris, "Anthony Trollope", the Graphic, XXVI (30 Dec. 1882), p.719.

⁶⁵Intro. to The Trollope Reader, ed. E.C.Dunne and M.E.Dodd (N.Y. 1947), viii.

⁶⁶ibid.

⁶⁷"To Anthony Trollope, on re-reading his Barsetshire novels", the Literary Digest (N.Y.), LI (14 Aug. 1915), p.310.

Fortunately there is much more than oblivion of this kind to keep Trollope alive. Still, nostalgia for a bygone peaceful age is a dominant tone in the Trollope revival, noticeable, for example, in Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's appreciation in Charles Dickens and Other Victorians.⁶⁸ Through the reading of Sadleir, More, van Bokkelen Nicholls, Walpole and others, the beginnings of Trollopianism were an evocation of that indefinable quality so well expressed by Mgr. Knox in the London Mercury of February, 1922. "A Ramble in Barsetshire" summed up what was for many the experience of rediscovering the novelist.

Or do we regret the passing of something that was not mere shadow, a world we were not born into, yet one that coloured for us the outlook of boyhood, when Archdeacons really preserved and drank port and quoted Horace, and country doctors dared to roll their own pills, and Lady Luftons brooded like a visible Providence over the countryside... Trollope's rose-hued world, like a cloistral port... is all the better for keeping; Barchester, caught once for all by the artist's brush in a moment of mellow sunset, lives on, uncontaminated by change, in that attitude.⁶⁹

It is a potent magic still, though not the only one.

⁶⁸ See also the appreciation by Helen Darbishire given in 1925, printed in Somerville College Chapel Addresses and Other Papers (London, 1962), pp. 105-110; Desmond MacCarthy, Portraits (London, 1931), pp. 270-277.

⁶⁹ v, 18, p. 385.

Chapter Three

THE ROCKS AND VALLEYS

"But, as I was saying, I do like a little romance about them, - just a sniff, as I call it, of the rocks and valleys ... Of course, bread and cheese is the real thing. The rocks and valleys are no good at all, if you haven't got that."

- Mrs. Greenow in
Can You Forgive Her?¹

Nearly all Trollope's stories are concerned with young people falling in love, triumphing over monetary, parental and class barriers and living happily ever after. "What further need be said as to Reginald and his happy bride?"² This is the question I wish to consider in a chapter concerned with Young Love as a central theme of Trollope's work; and I feel that a great deal is to be said, first by way of definition - differentiating "love" from "romance", and second by demonstration that what Bradford Booth disparaged as "powderpuff romance" to suit popular taste - a hackneyed formula of wedding bells and the promise of a well-filled nursery - was the cornerstone of Trollope's art, and the ideal

¹Can You Forgive Her? (1865), Ch. LXIV, p.295.

²The American Senator (1962), Ch. LXXX, p.556. Trollope frequently mocks the wedding bells formula ending which he uses in most of his novels. See He Knew He Was Right (1963), Ch. LXXXVIII for a piece of self-mockery on this theme, or Ayala's Angel, Ch. LXIV.

vehicle for his views on life.³

What Booth fails to do in his very brief treatment of so vital a topic is to distinguish clearly what Trollope defined as "love" and this causes him to make several misleading statements, such as:

The love element in his? novels is nothing more than a concession to public taste...

Trollope did not dare to violate this most unfortunate of all Victorian traditions.

But the stories he tells so frequently concern immature, adolescent romance that the reader is moved to charge him with insincerity.

In a critic so keenly sympathetic as Booth it is strange to find such serious charges as "insincerity" and one feels bound to examine them fully. Booth mounts his attack on a very doubtful hypothesis to begin with: that because Trollope regarded plots as the least important aspect of his fiction he was content to work from the basic boy-meets-girl formula:

There are obstacles - usually social - to the marriage; but, except in a few instances in which melodramatic tragedy intervenes, honesty and devotion conquer snobbishness, and the world is made safe for love.

³Bradford Booth's criticism referred to in this discussion (pp. 85-95) is to be found in his study, pp. 164-169. J.H. Wildman in The Trollopian, I, 1 (Mar. 1946), pp. 17-22, saw a similar weakness in Trollope's presentation of love on the basis of his use of conventional romance features. The view has persisted; even A.O.J. Cockshut brushes his treatment of love aside, noting that it is at its best when it occurs for ^{the sake of} something else (p. 125) and is vitiated by stock plot mechanics.¹

When Booth goes on to speak of "the tragedy" of Trollope's "capitulation to the stereotype of romantic love" we see that his concern is with "romance" - the apparatus of legacies, changes of status, timely deaths, and so forth, which enables the novelist to award sugar-plums to his virtuous characters. Moreover, Booth's criticism is highly selective, and virtually ignores the studies of misplaced love, marital tyranny, failures of love after marriage, and infidelity, which I consider in my next chapter. But even if Booth's strictures apply only to the stories of Young Love, it would be unwise to regard them as Cinderella stories written to order, for the very intensity of Trollope's belief in a few simple maxims about love, gives these stories a power which lifts them above the materials of popular sentimental tales. "Love shall be lord of all" is no mere apparatus of the story, but a conviction which lies at the heart of Trollopian fiction.⁴

We must begin this examination, as Booth does, with what Trollope says about love in his Autobiography, and decide what kind of love he is talking about when he says:

It is admitted that a novel can hardly be made interesting or successful without love. Some few might be named, but even in those the attempt breaks down, and the softness of love is found to be necessary to complete the story.⁵

⁴Since writing this chapter I have found that Prof. J. Hillis Miller bases a discussion in The Form of Victorian Fiction (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1968), pp. 123-139, on the idea that love as the ultimate commitment of self is the cornerstone of Trollope's fiction.

⁵Autobiography, Ch. XII, p.192.

It is clear that Trollope means young love - the intensely passionate, romantic, idyllic emotion, most commonly experienced in youth - which the popular storytellers stereotyped and sentimentalised in his day as they do in ours. One of my tasks in this chapter will be to show how much vigour and felt life went into Trollope's romantic love stories, making the formula endings, the sudden windfalls and timely deaths, at worst, merely irritating inconveniences in face of the human truth projected throughout the action. Trollope is not only aware of the absurdities of the romantic conventions, he constantly makes use of them for ironic comment on how young people behave. Ayala's Angel is a perfect example of the way in which Trollope can utilise romance formulae while satirising them for their absurdity:

But then in novels the most indifferent hero comes out right at last. Some god comes out of a theatrical cloud and leaves the poor devil ten thousand a-year and a title. He isn't much of a hero when he does go right under such inducements, but he suffices for the plot, and everything is rose-coloured.⁶

Or consider the Crinoline and Macassar scenes in The Three Clerks, which are used for ironical comment on the "real" predicament of Harry Norman:

"Oh! two rival knights in love with the same lady, of course," and Harry gave a gentle sigh as he thought of his own still unhealed grief.⁷

⁶Ch. XXXVIII, p.363.

⁷Ch. XIX, p.210.

On what basis, then, can we assume that Trollope chafed under the law that "there must be love in a novel."⁸ Are we to assume, as Booth does, that Trollope capitulated to public demand for puffball romance, and that his defence of his practice in the Autobiography is specious and insincere?

In his article on Novel-Reading in the Nineteenth Century of January, 1879 Trollope puts his views about love in the novel with such enthusiasm that it is hard to imagine he felt constrained by this subject. To the young:

the one thing of most importance to them is whether they shall love rightly or wrongly.⁹

Booth, however, seems to regard this ~~his~~ moral conscientiousness as verging on hypocrisy, but surely ethical concerns in this area of his work are vital.

However, it is still necessary to clarify his use of the word "love" and then relate it to his ethical obligations as a novelist. Love takes many forms in the novels. In general I would agree with Professor Hillis Miller that Trollope follows the romantic convention of love at first sight, but at the same time I believe Trollope allows his characters much more will-power in the matter

⁸ Autobiography, Ch. VIII, p.123.

⁹ The Nineteenth Century, V (January, 1879), p.28.

than this phrase suggests.¹⁰ Nor is love always the sudden blinding flash of popular convention. Fanny Clavering cannot stand the sight of the curate whose perseverance finally breaks down her resistance, and Ayala Dormer's remark at the end of Ayala's Angel that she had loved ugly Jonathan Stubbs from the first is simply an excuse for her earlier folly. It is perfectly true that once committed to love (having received due intimation of the male's intention) Trollope's heroines remain staunch, faithful and true, even if their choice has been wrong, but the very process of falling in love does not have to mean taking leave of one's senses.¹¹ Trollope approves of practical wisdom in affairs of the heart, and, I think, in his unique way indicates a perfectly valid reading of how people actually behave. We all know something of love's folly (and Trollope certainly does not ignore it) but he also brings out qualities of caution, calculation and shrewdness in the experience. By this I do not mean that love is under the control of self-interested reason, merely that

¹⁰ Hillis Miller notes Trollope's stress on "what is spontaneous, irrational, and uncontrollable about falling in love.", p. 125. Cockshut on the other hand declares that love at first sight seemed "too stagey and improbable" to Trollope, p. 112. As usual Trollope evades definition. Many of his heroes and heroines do fall in love on the instant like Miranda and Ferdinand ("At the first sight / They have changed eyes," The Tempest, I, ii, 440-1. But Ayala Dormer is not the best example for Hillis Miller's argument about spontaneity; she learns to love after having been a silly girl for nine-tenths of the novel. The point to be made is that Trollope often satirises the kind of love Hillis Miller has in mind, advocating moderation, restraint and good sense. Like Jane Austen he seems to prefer apatheia to sensibility.

¹¹ On this point at least Trollope is consistent. True love has to be

clear-headedness is often noticeable in the whole approach to courtship and marriage. Extreme self-regard in terms of ambition, wealth, social rank, is seen by Trollope as a crime against love. Excessive prudence and caution is also treated severely, but at the other end of the scale extravagantly romantic attitudes are satirised. Too much practicality is the fault of Florence Burton in The Claverings and of Arthur Wilkinson in The Bertrams; too much impractical dreaming is the fault of Ayala Dormer and Lizzie Eustace (who has many other faults besides). Thus Trollope seems to be poisoning his characters between the ecstatic, magical, transforming experience of love, which delights the lovers and often baffles their elders, and the realities of stable, material considerations as to jobs, homes and the future responsibilities of family life. It is, as Mrs. Greenow remarked, a matter of the bread and cheese as well as the rocks and valleys, a matter of balance and compromise - the essence of the Trollopian view of life.¹² Such a philosophy of love - if it can be so described -

an ever fixed mark for ethical reasons discussed on pp. 95-100. However, Cockshut's examples of characters persisting even when love is not returned are not of the best; Larry Twentyman is indeed rejected in The American Senator, but is happily married in Ayala's Angel.

¹²Cockshut's thesis of a "dark" Trollope leads him to understate the place of young love in the novels, and it is misleading to suggest that later books depict love in a more sombre fashion than the earlier novels. To call it a "destroyer" on evidence of An Old Man's Love and The Way We Live Now (p.114) is surely an exaggeration. I disagree also with the view that Trollope makes courtship the time of untroubled joys and marriage the "bread and cheese" of

gives lyrical expression to the experience, but at the same time it lays stress on the practical issues which must be reconciled if the relationship is to prosper. This is, after all, one of the crucial questions of the most detailed of his love stories, that of Glencora and Plantagenet, a question which, as so often in this world, is left finally unresolved. Yet it would be wrong to assume that Trollope looks for a midway position between carefully controlled feeling and commonsense; his sympathies are always with the raptures of his youthful lovers, while he understands the impatience and irritation of their prudent elders. But "love shall be lord of all", remains the basis of his doctrine. As Priscilla Stanbury advises her sister about Mr. Gibson:

"I can find no escape from this, - that you should love him before you say that you will take him. But honest, loyal love need not, I take it, be of that romantic kind which people write about in novels and poetry. You need not think him to be perfect, or the best or grandest of men. Your heart will tell you whether he is dear to you."¹³

This is a typical gambit in point of fact: as we shall see in the discussion of The Three Clerks (pp. 103-8) Trollope does invest

love (p.112). It is true that Trollope makes music hall jokes about nagging wives and the end of bachelor bliss, but we must not miss the important equation between the ephemeral pleasure of courtship and the solid achievement of matrimony- the bread and cheese which truly nourishes. Much irony is deployed in showing how wisdom frequently flies out of the window when the couple fall in love, but all the same Trollope aims at a balance between prudence and passion.

¹³He Knew He Was Right, Ch. XXXIV, pp. 324-5.

his ordinary love affairs with highly romantic colouring. Still, the question here is that Trollope's emphasis is on the heart's discovery over-ruling calculation, which in its most damaging form is shown in the gold-digger's quest for wealth and social position.

That love must be lord of all is shown by the sub-plot of He Knew He Was Right in which Nora Rowley is faced with a choice between the worthy aristocrat, Mr. Glascock, and the impecunious young journalist, Hugh Stanbury. The vexed issue of prudence and passion is raised in Chapter Four by Nora's mother:

"Romance is a very pretty thing," Lady Rowley had been wont to say to her daughters, "and I don't think life would be worth having without a little of it. I should be very sorry to think that either of my girls would marry a man only because he had money. But you can't even be romantic without something to eat and drink."¹⁴

Although she loves Hugh, Nora resolves to accept Mr. Glascock, basing her decision on the wish to spare Hugh unseemly poverty. However when Glascock proposes she cannot be false to her better instincts. Later in the story Hugh makes up his mind to marry her, having come to the conclusion that he had enough money for "both shelter and clothes and bread and cheese"¹⁵ - a decision he reaches quite coolly, notice, as he is puffing his pipe on top of an omnibus

¹⁴ibid., Ch. IV, p.30.

¹⁵Ch. XXXIII, p.314.

in Chancery Lane. Trollope then asks some questions. How should a man double his burdens if he is in want of income? How can he bear to inflict the burden on "shoulders that are tender and soft."¹⁶ And what will happen when the children come? If the girl is prepared to share the burdens, then why should he fear what she does not fear? Trollope's tone here is benign and gently mocking, but undeniably sympathetic:

Of course there is a risk; but what excitement is there in anything in which there is none? So on the Tuesday he speaks his mind to the young lady, and tells her candidly that there will be potatoes for the two of them, - sufficient, as he hopes, of potatoes, but no more. As a matter of course the young lady replies that she for her part will be quite content to take the parings for her own eating. Then they rush deliciously into each other's arms and the matter is settled. For, though the convictions arising from the former line of argument may be set aside as often as need be, those reached from the latter are generally conclusive.¹⁷

In point of fact lovers who act in this way never do have to live on potatoes in Trollope's novels, but this does not invalidate the sentiment expressed.

It appears then that Trollope's statements about love recognize many varieties of the experience and must not be thought of as meeting a public demand for lightweight romance.¹⁸ On the contrary, love is the major issue of Trollope's fiction. In

¹⁶ ibid.

¹⁷ ibid., pp. 315-316.

¹⁸ Such ambiguities among critics as I have already noted point to the diversity of Trollope's presentation of love. As Cockshut

the course of this chapter I deal only with more extravagant manifestations of the experience in courtship, but I find what Trollope offers by way of ideals in love extremely significant to an understanding of his work. These ideals are seen in relation to realities, which are further discussed in my next chapter on marriage and the older generation of Trollope's characters. While it is an over-simplification to say, as Booth does, "that idyllic love did not affect him profoundly",¹⁹ it is true that he probed deeper into human problems after marriage or into love beyond the youthful, passionate level of courtship.

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As I said earlier it seems scarcely fair of Booth to suggest that Trollope's defence of writing love stories for the moral lessons they impart is a matter of salving his conscience. I think we have to recognize first of all the responsibility Trollope felt towards his work and public. We are seldom brought into touch with this aspect of the novelist revealed in his correspondence:

Il faut vivre. But with those of us who are high-minded there is an over-riding object, one more first even than the first, - that of doing our

says "Trollope is strangely contradictory when he deals with courtship." (p.124). I offer some explanations for the contradiction in discussions of four representative stories of Young Love on pp. 103-47.

¹⁹Booth, Trollope, p.166.

duty; which comprehends such excellence in his work as the workman may attain, though it be attained at the expense of profit.²⁰

And yet such high principle is always implicit in the Autobiography amid the mundane detail of writing schedules, the copy handed in on time, and the carefully charted income derived from his books. The order of his devotion is what sets him apart from a man like G.P.R. James "who writes novels as a hen lays eggs."²¹ Trollope took his art seriously then, and seldom missed an opportunity of speaking in favour of novel-writing, although his statements are frequently timid. Novels, he observed in the Nineteenth Century, in January, 1879, were "too often our mainstay in literature" and gave out a "constant flow of easy teaching which fills the mind of all readers with continual thoughts of love."²² The vast public now in existence for fiction, particularly young people, was exposed to novels, and Trollope had to justify his own romances to the satisfaction of his own conscience and of the suspicion of the book-buying public. He did so astutely, avoiding, as he said in the Autobiography, "the regions of absolute vice" but allowing himself plenty of scope in their "border-lands" as he called them.²³ Yet at the same time he firmly advocated a strong moral

²⁰ Letters, 924, p.500. Lecturing at Edinburgh on 28 January, 1870, Trollope made it clear that money-making and public acclaim were inadequate satisfactions to the writer, "On English Prose Fiction as a Rational Amusement", Four Lectures, ed. M. Parrish (London, 1938), p.96.

²¹ Edinburgh Review, XCVII (Apr. 1853), p.382.

²² V, pp. 26-29.

²³ Autobiography, XII, p.190.

tone to all fiction. As he said in his monograph on Thackeray:

I regard him who can put himself into close communication with young people year after year without making some attempt to do them good, as a very sorry fellow indeed.²⁴

A novel has "to instruct in morals while it amuses"; the novelist supplies moral lessons which he mixes up with "jam and honey."²⁵ Trollope's comments on his fellow novelists lay strong emphasis on their qualities as moral guides. It should be noted how Trollope links ethical considerations with technical ones, conveniently assuming that truth to human nature compels the novelist to make virtue triumph over evil, and to show the dominance of good qualities over bad. Anne Thackeray, for example, is superior to Rhoda Broughton because her novels are "sweet-savoured"; Miss Broughton is "less true to nature" - she allows her females to throw themselves at men.²⁶ By this yardstick Disraeli is utterly contemptible, since his novels are full of men and women achieving fame and fortune by shabby stratagems.

On the other hand Trollope's morality is neither intrusive nor restricted; he is too honest and generous-spirited for that.

²⁴Thackeray, (London, 1880), p.202.

²⁵ibid., p.109, p.205.

²⁶Autobiography, Ch. XIII, p.222.

Podsnappery was not to his liking, as can be seen at many stages in his career, from the contretemps with Macleod over Rachel Ray to his defence of Lady Wood and Rhoda Broughton.²⁷ While not wishing to offend his public he nevertheless ventured into areas of sexual behaviour with commendable frankness. Consider Dr. Wortle's School on the matter of individual justifications in an adultery issue; the need of charity towards the prostitute brought up in The Vicar of Bullhampton; and the sexuality so dominant in The Claverings. Trollope adopts a sound ethical function for the novel, but is impelled as an artist to venture into regions of moral ambiguity. As he puts it in Ralph the Heir; the novelist writes:

in order that we should know what are the exact failings which oppress ourselves, and thus learn to hate, and if possible to avoid in life the faults of character which in life are hardly visible, but which in portraiture of life can be made to be so transparent.²⁸

Or, as he said so well in the Autobiography, the novelist's concern is with "truth of description, truth of character, human truth as to men and women".²⁹ Now here we can look for ambiguity

²⁷ Emma Caroline, Lady Wood (c. 1820-79), was the mother of Trollope's good friend, Anna C. Steele. Her novel, Sorrow on the Sea, 1868, was bitterly attacked for immorality. Trollope found it harmless enough, Letters, 391, pp. 232-4.

²⁸ (1871) III, Ch. III, pp. 326-7.

²⁹ Autobiography, Ch. XII, p.196.

and contradiction, because Trollope the artist is committed to truth, and yet at the same time feels bound to conform to a fairly rigid ethical code. Consequently we do find failures of nerve, perhaps, certainly inconsistencies; Caroline Waddington's complete change of character from the domineering, head-strong woman to submissive wife at the end of The Bertrams is a case in point. But the remarkable thing is how seldom Trollope can be accused of false resolutions of this kind - the really damaging collapse of character. Given Trollope's melioristic philosophy, the happy endings and lavish distribution of worldly goods are to be expected; they can hardly be construed in the light of compromises with his art, or as part of Trollope's "tragedy" as Booth will have it. And in many cases they are perfectly in tune with the spirit of the novel. When Harry Clavering returns dutifully to Florence Burton at the end of the story, we do not feel cheated; the character was developed in such a way as to show his affinity with Julia, and yet we still feel that he would return to Florence, the steadier, homelier type of woman. The strength of what Trollope achieves throughout nine-tenths of the novel is not undermined by a reliance on the machinery of conventional romance to bring it to a conclusion. Indeed, certain of its properties are most useful to Trollope, particularly those conventions surrounding the hero and heroine which I am now about

to examine.

Very much of a novelist's work must appertain to the intercourse between young men and young women. It is admitted that a novel can hardly be made interesting or successful without love.³⁰

We have already seen how Trollope's attitude towards this subject is imbued with wholesome, moral sense. He is therefore drawn to the commonplace experiences of love, while his lovers are often predictable and even rather dull. The love scenes in Framley Parsonage, he said, showed "downright honest love":

... there was no pretence on the part of the lady that she was too ethereal to be fond of a man, no half-and-half inclination on the part of the man to pay a certain price and no more for a pretty toy. Each of them longed for the other, and they were not ashamed to say so.³¹

They were flesh and blood characters, in short. Whereas the characters so often met within fiction in his experience walked on stilts or, in the sensational stories of the time, were figures of incredible passion, wickedness or hapless virtue. Commonsense, restraint and patience are recommended, although they do not necessarily take the place of passion. Will Belton acts with manly restraint when Clara Amedroz refuses him but is no less passionate than Harry Clavering. Tom Tringle's excessive actions under the

³⁰ ibid., Ch. XII, p.192.

³¹ ibid., Ch. VIII, pp. 123-4.

influence of unrequited love likewise do not mean that he is insincere. Trollope's treatment of love is so varied, it becomes almost impossible to generalise; and, as I shall show in discussion of several of his love themes, there is a good deal of ambivalence in it.³²

Ambivalence is certainly to be found in the whole area of Trollope's realism which I am about to examine specifically with regard to his use of the terms "hero" and "heroine". Trollope knew that too much fidelity to the commonplace could produce dullness. Thus he had to strike a balance, so he evolved a kind of low-level romance to suit his own requirements, investing the lives of small-town landlord, squire and cleric with just enough of the "heroic" to stimulate the attention of his readers. A good novel, he insisted, had to be both sensational and realistic.

"Castles with unknown passages are not compatible with my homely muse," he claims in The Bertrams; but all the same lost wills, legacies, and even murder, play a part in his fiction.³³ Likewise he constantly disclaims the labels of "hero" and "heroine", professing to find them an irritating convention forced upon him

³²For example, it might be argued that heroines should not know the state of their hearts until the hero has expressed his interest: "A girl loves most often because she is loved, - not from choice on her part," says Trollope in Ayala's Angel, Ch. XVII, pp. 154-5, but this is not so in He Knew He Was Right. Nora Rowley nurses her love for Hugh Stanbury in secret, long before he has declared himself.

³³The Bertrams (1859), I, Ch. XIII, p.279. For a full treatment of

by public taste. As he exclaims in Barchester Towers:

The sorrows of our heroes and heroines, they
are your delight, oh public! their sorrows,
or their sins, or their absurdities; not their
virtues, good sense, and consequent rewards.³⁴

Trollope can blame his public's taste in this matter, but his skill as a writer tells him that by taking a middle course he adds considerable room for manoeuvre with character and situation. The kind of advantages such flexibility gives him is noticeable in The Eustace Diamonds when Trollope teases his readers' expectations in Ch. XXXV, "Too Bad For Sympathy", by saying that a true hero should be above falsehood in love. Frank Greystock is at this point trembling on the brink of deceiving Lucy Morris. Trollope then asks his readers whether they are not deluding themselves in expecting a perfect hero, suggesting that the novelist must not present a figure of impossible virtue, but one who may serve as a reasonable model for us to emulate:

The true picture of life as it is, if it could
be adequately painted, would show men what they are,
and how they might rise, not, indeed, to perfection,
but one step first, and then another on the ladder.³⁵

There is a grain of truth here, but for the most part Trollope is disingen^uous, allowing Frank Greystock all the scope he needs to

this theme see unpublished diss. by P.D. Edwards, "Anthony Trollope and the Victorian Novel of 'Sensation'", University of London, 1961.

³⁴Barchester Towers (1966), Ch. LI, p.488.
(1960)

³⁵The Eustace Diamonds, Ch. XXXV, p.317.

venture into dubious moral territory, but behaving in the end, as a romantic hero should. Such sleight of hand is noticeable also in The Claverings.

It will, perhaps, be complained of him Harry that he is fickle, vain, easily led, and almost as easily led to evil as to good.³⁶

This is really how young men are in life, Trollope adds, and this is how I, as a truthful novelist, observe them. Of course it does not stop him offering us Mr. Saul, who is thoroughly romanticised in his devotion to his love, Fanny. Thus Trollope, once again, ensures that he has the best of both worlds - truth of life and romantic idyll.

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The discussion of The Three Clerks and Ayala's Angel which follows shows how Trollope's "conventional" romantic materials enrich the texture of these novels, and how Trollope's ambivalent attitude to realism and fantasy in young love produces an absorbing and truthful picture of the emotion; and, since these novels are drawn from opposite ends of his career, they show the consistency and continuity of Trollope's accomplishment in this area of his fiction.

³⁶The Claverings (1857) Ch. X, p.98.

As I have said Trollope deliberately allowed himself much latitude in defining the words "hero" and "heroine".

In the last chapter of The Three Clerks he says disarmingly:

he [the author] professes to do his work without any such appendages [as hero and heroine] to his story - heroism there may be, and he hopes there is - more or less of it there should be in a true picture of most characters; but heroes and heroines, as so called, are not commonly met with in our daily walks of life.³⁷

His characters, he suggests, are people like us, but while we accept them as more true-to-life than one is accustomed to meeting in romantic stories, we are no less yielding to an unreal world of extravagant devotions and highly romantic appeal. The skilful intermingling of romance and realistic presentation of everyday life in The Three Clerks is achieved by the juxtaposition of the plot involving Alaric Tudor and Undy Scott with the love affairs of all three heroes, particularly Charley Tudor. It is this aspect of the novel I now wish to consider.

All three men are interestingly presented, even the priggish Harry Norman, who is inclined to moral utterances, but who is aware of his smugness. Alaric too, is presented in the round: a basically well intentioned young man, flawed by weakness of character which, coupled with his ambition, leads to ruin. Harry loves Gertrude, who quickly succumbs to Alaric's charm. Trollope makes

³⁷The Three Clerks (1959), Ch. XLVII, pp. 543-4.

an important point about young love and prudence early on by making Gertrude reply evasively when her sister asks her when she will announce her engagement to Harry. Trollope adds the comment:

Prudent, sensible, high-minded, well-disciplined Gertrude! But had her heart really felt a spark of love for the man of whom she spoke, how much would prudent, sensible, high-minded considerations have weighed with her? Alas! not a feather.³⁸

Unfavourable connotations have already been given to the term "prudence" as meaning calculation and self-interest in Alaric's case, so we are well aware that Gertrude's words evade the issue. Trollope tends to punish the woman who lets material considerations swamp the affections of the heart as can be seen in The Bertrams and The Claverings considered next. Love in a cottage may be folly, he so often says, but while he makes no comment on the economic safety line for matrimony he makes it quite clear that love shall be lord of all - not prudence.³⁹

The third clerk, Charley Tudor, is Trollope's favourite: the well-meaning hobbledehoy drawn from the ranks Trollope knew so well of young men "in ambiguous positions, just on the confines of respectability."⁴⁰ But this is the same Charley whose love

³⁸ ibid., Ch. V, p.57.

³⁹ Trollope's use of the phrase recalls Keats's lines in Lamia, II.

⁴⁰ The Three Clerks, Ch. XX, p.217.

for Katie Woodward (among Trollope's favourite heroines) partakes of the very ethereal qualities Trollope so often mocks. Here we are up against a difficulty. The tender passion usually merits a certain amount of ridicule: the love-sick swain exemplified by Johnny James is regarded by Trollope with some irritation. But one has to recognize also that Trollope applauds the innocence and spontaneity of romantic love. In The Three Clerks Charley's love for Katie is ideal and thoroughly desirable in Trollope's eyes, and is deliberately placed alongside the unseemly affair with Norah:

He made visions ^{to} of himself of a sweet home, and a sweeter, sweetest, lovely wife; a love whose hair should not be redolent of smoke, nor her hands reeking with gin, nor her services at the demand of every libertine who wanted a screw of tobacco, or a glass of 'cold without.'

He had made such a vision to himself, and the angel with which he had filled it was not a creature of his imagination.⁴¹

This is an example of how Trollope fulfils the moral end he proposes for himself in the treatment of young love. But at the same time Trollope manages to satirise, through Charley's novel of *Crinoline* and *Macassar*, the apparatus of romantic love stories, the circumstances in fact not very far removed from the "real" love of Katie and Charley in which Trollope believes! Indeed, the

⁴¹ibid., Ch. XVII, p.191.

question may well be asked whether Trollope is fully aware of his feeling here, such luxuriant emotion is lavished on the treatment of his lovers, particularly towards the end of the novel, when Charley is forced to renounce Katie, "large globules of sorrow" splashing around him in the dust as he walked away - "as Adam did when he was driven out of Paradise."⁴² Katie herself almost expires in the manner of the most conventional heroine of romance.

Alaric's practical marriage and his mercenary plot to involve Charley with Clementina Golightly form the background to Charley's personal dilemma, which emerges in Ch. XVII in which we are told that he had been taught to laugh at romance and that his squalid love "was a stern, palpable reality."⁴³ The next three chapters, entitled "Morning", "Afternoon" and "Evening", ironically interweave the reality and the romance in Charley's experience which are a stage in his progress towards maturity. This ironic counterpointing of the main true-ideal-love situation justifies what would otherwise be a digression when Charley reads his novel to the Woodwards a little later on. The final scenes of the novel bring the elements of romance and "true" love together, amply justifying Trollope's technique of fulfilling romantic expectations

⁴²ibid., Ch.XXX, pp. 368-9.

⁴³ibid., Ch. XVII, p.192.

in the key of ordinary day to day experience, by showing Charley en famille.⁴⁴ This is followed by a glimpse into the future of noisy family life, which is set alongside a review of Charley's third novel mocking the extravagant romance. Charley's eventual realisation that the review has been concocted by Katie and Mrs. Woodward brings The Three Clerks to a close with the feeling that he has broken through illusions about himself and come to maturity.

A late novel, Ayala's Angel, also yields interesting material on the theme of romantic illusions and healthy adult responsibilities in love and courtship. The settings particularly evoke an atmosphere both poignant and full of charm: walks in Kensington Gardens, Rome, the Tyrol, and the lakescenery of Inverness provide an atmosphere of serenity and romance ideal for the mood of the novel. Written at the end of Trollope's career it is remarkably gay and full of charming pictures and memories; the scene in which Nina and Ayala ride simultaneously over the brook stays in the mind like an old hunting print.

One thinks of Ayala's Angel in relation to Shakespearean comedy; indeed Trollope himself seems conscious of certain echoes, for he links Tom Tringle in Ayala's mind with Bottom wearing the ass's head. Most of all we are thoroughly conscious of Shakespearean love entanglements. Lucy is pursued by Isadore Hamel, a sculptor;

⁴⁴ibid., Ch, XLVII, p.541.

while Ayala, who cherishes an ideal love she pictures to herself as an Angel of Light, is pursued by Tom Tringle, her cousin, and by Colonel Jonathan Stubbs. Other romances are grouped around those of the Dormer girls, and add to the fun. Some of the characters are really interesting, such as Frank Houston, who has a certain Jamesian ambiguity about him. The plot is carried forward with verve and fertile invention; and although comedy is the book's intention it makes a number of comments on the nature of love and profitable attitudes to life. And although the Spectator at the time of its appearance thought little of its plot - a mere "thread of story"⁴⁵ - I maintain that a wealth of invention holds the reader's attention to the end. For example, the proposed elopement of Gertrude and Frank Houston, thwarted by her father, does take place much later in the story - but with an ineffectual army officer, Benjamin Batsby, who has switched his affections from Ayala to Gertrude. And in the finale of the story also, one's affection grows for both Tom and his troubled father, which adds a poignancy to the closing chapters of the book.

Ayala's Angel does two things: it plays with Trollope's favourite theme of true love versus self-interest in various forms, from parental anxiety to Frank's cynicism. On the one hand we have

⁴⁵The Spectator, LIV (18 June, 1881), p.804.

Frank making a joke of the all-important question - "What is your idea of the lowest income at which a prudent, - say not idiotically-quixotic hero, - might safely venture to become heroic?";⁴⁶ and on the other, Aunt Dosett proclaiming of Ayala:

"What I want to know is what it is she looks for. Like any other girl, she expects to get married some day, I suppose; but she has been reading poetry, and novels, and trash, till she has got her head so full of nonsense that she doesn't know what it is she does want. I should like to shake her till I shook all the romance out of her. If there is anything I do hate it is romance, while bread and meat, and coals, and washing, are so dear."⁴⁷

Sir Thomas Tringle has no need to worry on the score of money but shares Aunt Dosett's complete inability to think of marriage in any other than the most hard-headed and practical terms.

The second element to be noticed about Ayala's Angel is the variety of manifestations of love Trollope puts before us. Basically it is a matter of the delusions of romantic fantasies and the true happiness of actual love. In Ayala's experience, for example, the Angel of Light theory is shown to be arrant nonsense, as Lady Albury keeps insisting:

"Are you aware what kind of man is my cousin, Jonathan Stubbs? Has it occurred to you that in truth and gallantry, in honour, honesty, courage

⁴⁶ Ayala's Angel, Ch. XXXVIII, p.364.

⁴⁷ ibid., Ch. XXXIX, p.378. To my mind this represents the focus of Trollope's story - the growth of a silly girl towards true love. I find Hillis Miller's version of Ayala's "defence of her selfhood from the pressures of the community" ingenious but off course, The Form of Victorian Fiction, p.129.

and real tenderness, he is so perfect as to be quite unlike to the crowd of men you see?"⁴⁸

Additional irony is noticeable here through the extravagant terms of Lady Albury's praise. Stubbs is the swan - not the ugly duckling - all the time. And of course Ayala comes round to this point of view in time: it is a pretty version of the familiar moral fairy tale. The folly of Ayala's dream is shown early on, in Ch. XXV when she says to herself:

"You are not he, - not he, not that Angel of Light, which must come to me, radiant with poetry, beautiful to the eye, full of all excellences of art, lifted above the earth by the qualities of his mind, - such a one as must come to me if it be that I am ever to confess that I love."⁴⁹

What Trollope contrives through this silly situation is to show Ayala coming down to earth, achieving a more human relationship to the betterment of her own character, and yet finding also that she does not have to sacrifice the magic of the experience of love.

Such illumination is made clearer by the surrounding love affairs, particularly Frank Houston's. In many ways Frank is Jonathan's opposite; he is handsome but dishonest in love, cynical and unprincipled. He pursues Gertrude Tringle for the sake of her fortune, while keeping the faithful Imogene Docimer in the background. She had been devoted to him,

⁴⁸Ayala's Angel, Ch. XXVI, p.244.

⁴⁹p. 238.

but yet she had been taught by him to regard her love as a passion which of its nature contained something of the ridiculous.⁵⁰

Frank's barren attitude is shown to be contemptible; but moved at last by Imogene's devotion Frank comes to his senses and promises to marry her, even though he could have secured the profitable match with Gertrude after all.

Another major love affair of the novel is that of Lucy Dormer and the sculptor, Isadore Hamel, through which Trollope makes several gibes about bohemian society. Their love exists on a somewhat transcendental plane, especially from Isadore's viewpoint, since he persistently refuses to accommodate himself to the realities of the financial situation. Sir Thomas Tringle's point of view is here substantially Trollope's:

"Love is all very well," continued Sir Thomas, in his gruffest voice; "but love should be regulated by good sense."⁵¹

It is in the impossibility of controlling the madness of love by proportioned commonsense that much of Trollope's love comedy derives. Tom's love of Ayala is rendered with amusing hyperbole: "Tom was prepared to go anywhere for blood."⁵²

Meanwhile Gertrude's own romance is not going well. Knowing that her father regards Frank Houston as a penniless adventurer,

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, Ch. XXXVIII, p. 365.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, Ch. XXX, p. 287.

⁵² *ibid.*, Ch. XXXV, p. 334.

she tries to persuade him to elope with her. Her nature demands that love should have the qualities of intrigue and mystery (this is what Trollope often has in mind when he satirises love - the rocks and valleys side of it) while Frank, the realist, fully aware of her ideas stubbornly refuses to understand her. The dialogue between them in Chapter XXXVII is superb. While they talk, poor Tom is hovering like a ghost around the estate, living out the ^{kind of} drama Gertrude is proposing, and thereby adding to the irony with which Trollope presents the whole atmosphere of extravagant attitudes to love. Furthermore, the texture is enriched as we compare Frank's speech with Jonathan Stubbs's disquisition on matrimony which paints a similar picture of domestic cares.⁵³ Yet once the young heroes succumb to love their practical objections to marriage disappear. As Trollope is fond of pointing out even the most well governed personalities, like Plantaganet Palliser, become fools in love. Carefully laid plans of career and conduct are swept aside. Obedient daughters become iron-willed and resourceful conspirators, as here where Gertrude goes on a hunger strike - a gesture Trollope neatly undercuts by showing her sneaking to the larder for a snack when the rest of the house are asleep. The folly of love is gently mocked by Trollope, but it would be wrong to say that he is critical of it.

⁵³ See Ch. XX, pp. 183-5.

As Mrs. Greenow says there must be "a sniff, as I call it, of the rocks and valleys." Stubbs too confesses "I don't mind a little Byron now and again."⁵⁴ Ayala's Angel is particularly youthful and vital in this respect, and it is wonderful to see in this work of the last years such high spirits and understanding of the young.

It is so hard for a young man to speak of love, if there be real love, - so impossible that a girl should do so! Not a word had been spoken, but each had thought that the other must have known.⁵⁵

Thus the basic issue is put as to Lucy and Isadore, and at the end of the story, Ayala too comes to Jonathan Stubbs without need of words.

When she thought of it all afterwards, as she did so many scores of times, she never could tell how it had occurred. When she accused him in her playfulness, telling him that he had taken for granted that of which he had had no sign, she never knew whether there had been aught of truth in her accusation. But she did know that he had hardly closed the door behind him when she was in his arms, and felt the burning love of his kisses upon her cheeks. There had been no more asking whether he was to have any other answer.⁵⁶

Prudence and caution, restraint and lack of display are often held up as worthy traits in love and courtship, but the essence of the matter is still that love shall be lord of all.

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⁵⁴Ayala's Angel, Ch. XVIII, p.172.

⁵⁵ibid., Ch. IV, p.34.

⁵⁶ibid., Ch. LV, p.534.

The first part of this chapter examined the general moral and artistic principles governing Trollope's treatment of Young Love, emphasising the adroitness with which he meets his audience's demand for "romance" and his own concern with how people actually behave. So far I have been concerned with the love ethic in the context of Trollope's own upbringing and philosophy, and with its presentation rather more as a consequence of plot than character. The next section of this chapter probes more deeply into the conditions of Trollope's art of the commonplace, showing how the ideals of love, however noble and inspiring they may be, scarcely survive the piercing gaze of the novelist under the obligation to tell truth. Thus the central issue I now wish to raise is the impact of Trollope's real and truthful discernment of human behaviour in love upon the ideals of conduct his fiction is also meant to embody. My observations are based chiefly on his heroines because the ideals of love are centred in them; and, of course, love is made to seem their whole existence while for men it is part of their lives only.

First, a brief statement on the nature of Trollope's characterisation relevant to his depiction of love and courtship. Trollope's fiction is based on expression of the commonplace and familiar in experience, and his search is constantly for the average and representative - and therefore in all probability the most reliable evidence as to human conduct. The principle of consistency and continuity is

thus not only applicable to the range and technical accomplishment of his work, but a fundamental part of his doctrine and discovery embodied in fiction. Trollope's art illuminates much of what would otherwise go by unnoticed simply because it represents the humdrum passage of life around us. He makes us see, acknowledge and re-examine what we normally take for granted; he rediscovers the familiar, and our lives are the richer for it. Unfortunately, the extraordinary gift for reproducing the mundane and ordinary events which make up so much of our lives guarantees that Trollope's novels seldom stay clearly before us. We forget them easily, just as we do the vast majority of our own past lives. A price has to be paid for avoiding the high peaks of incident and adventure most novelists rely on. Trollope is, of course, aware of this situation, and does indeed indulge our need for the idiosyncratic, the grotesque and the marvellous, by surrounding his main characters with figures who do stay in our memories. Priscilla Stanbury, Mr. Moulder, Clementina Golightly, Captain Boodle - there are a few in each novel - and some giants of the breed like Mrs. Proudie, Sophie Gordeloup, and Chaffanbrass, who are immortal. But the young heroes (perhaps Phineas Finn excepted) and heroines do fade.

Yet this is not to say that they are dull, shadowy, unreal, merely that one would look among them in vain for a Heathcliff or

a Tess.⁵⁷ The investigation of norms of behaviour precludes the presentation of titanic passions, for as Robert Donovan observed, Trollope had no inkling of deep moral divisions in the human heart. Right and wrong were immutable essences for him,⁵⁸ but, as I show in Chapter Seven, Trollope is far readier to allow for the difficulties of moral choice than Donovan suggests. Trollope's best fiction is marked by great tolerance and willingness to judge cases according to their own peculiar circumstances. Where society is the arbiter of standards of conduct - and its mores are usually quite acceptable to Trollope - there can hardly be scope for a truly dynamic hero, although there are gains in overall consistency with the hero scaled down, as it were to suit his environment.⁵⁹

We must accept then a certain loss of clarity as the inevitable consequence of Trollope's art of the commonplace. Yet when we re-read one of his novels we enjoy that pleasure of recognizing the familiar; each detail springs into place at once because a host of minor characters fills the landscape. Fullness of detail is a prime quality of Trollope's art, executed with the gusto of a painter like his friend, the master of the genre painting, W.P.Frith, if not with the feeling evident in the work of another, and closer artist friend, J.G.Millais. Trollope's art does not

⁵⁷I disagree with those contributors to early issues of Nineteenth Century Fiction who found Trollope's young characters generally dull and commonplace. See E.L.Skinner, "Mr. Trollope's Young Ladies", N.C.F., IV, 3 (Dec. 1949), pp. 197-207, and Russell Fraser, "Anthony Trollope's Younger Characters", N.C.F., VI, 2 (Sept. 1951), pp.96-106.

⁵⁸R.Donovan, "Trollope's Prentice Work", Modern Philology, LIII (Feb. 1956), p.186.

⁵⁹This point is discussed more fully in my final chapter.

discover in moments of intensity the deeper sources of emotion in man; yet his accurate observation of human responses amid the pressures of day to day living amid the family and society as a whole, constitute in themselves a valid and considerable revelation of life: this is how things are in the usual way of events; most of our lives happen this way. Though it is not what we remember most vividly and readily, still it has made us what we are, and it is in this evocation of the fairly even tenor of life that Trollope's genius resides. He needs space and time for his art, and this is why his lengthy panoramas of lives unfolding are most Trollopian and most satisfying. It is the length of our acquaintance with Glencora Palliser which makes her unforgettable among his heroines. But in the other heroines, too, the same technique is used, a process of gradual revealing through a number of insignificant actions and tiny observations - hers and society's of her; with the author at our elbow conducting us through manor house, farm, and fashionable square to which we respond with that kind of ease we reserve for scenes where we are most relaxed and with which we are most familiar. Let me illustrate this from The Claverings, in the minor plot of the love between Fanny Clavering and the curate, Mr. Saul. This is particularly interesting because it shows the individual reacting against the opinions of the group rather than in compliance with its will.

The dawning of love is put before us in a very odd way in Fanny's case. Saul is first presented in a very uncomplimentary light in Chapter Two, first from Mr. Clavering's point of view and then by means of impersonal narration:

Mr. Saul was very tall and very thin, with a tall thin head, and weak eyes, and a sharp, well-cut nose, and, so to say, no lips, and very white teeth, with no beard, and a well-cut chin. His face was so thin that his cheekbones obtruded themselves unpleasantly. He wore a long rusty black coat, and a high rusty black waistcoat, and trousers that were brown with dirty roads and general ill-usage.⁶⁰

This cadaverous clergyman (who bears certain resemblances to the great Mr. Crawley) is obviously totally unsuitable as Fanny's suitor and when he proposes during their walk through the drizzle splashing along a muddy lane she is vaguely insulted, a feeling shared by the rest of the family:

"Upon my word," said the rector, "I think it was very impertinent." Fanny would not have liked to use that word herself, but she loved her father for using it.⁶¹

What ensues is a very dull courtship, typical indeed of what can happen in life, just as much as the whirlwind romance. The situation is made more piquant, however, by the way in which Fanny comes round, not only to seeing the merits of Mr. Saul, but to resenting the critical attitude of the rest of the family towards him. It is one of those minor-key love experiences which are so much a part of life, and yet of their very nature cannot be the stuff of the most

⁶⁰The Claverings, Ch. II, p.20.

⁶¹ibid., Ch. VI, pp. 60-61.

memorable novels. In another respect the Saul-Fanny episode is part of the mood of the whole book; Saul's role is not unlike that of Florence Burton, though he has no rival. But she is, like him, a comparatively plain specimen:

Poor Florence Burton was short of stature, was brown, meagre, and poor-looking. So said Harry Clavering to himself.⁶²

Of course, one of the novel's concerns is with separating true worth from appearances, shiny or otherwise; indeed, it is one of Trollope's favourite themes in regard to love that the only beauty which matters is from within.

Attention to the humdrum affairs of life and to norms of behaviour does not entirely preclude passion either, but it is implied rather than stated. There are times when Trollope does depict open passion and they are usually disastrous scenes of blue stage fire, as in An Eye For An Eye when Mrs. O'Hara pushes Fred Neville over a cliff. And despite recent attempts to rescue Cousin Henry from oblivion I cannot help feeling that the frenzy of the central figure is much overdone.⁶³

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⁶²ibid., Ch. III, p.24.

⁶³See N.C.F., XX, 4 (Mar. 1966), pp. 385-9.

When we come on to consider the ways in which Trollope speaks about love and its manifestations in his characters we become involved in a fascinating problem, for what he wishes to convey as desirable norms of behaviour impose fantastic strains on both the reality of his creations and on our belief. This is most clearly seen in his presentation of women through whom the Trollopian love ethic has its fullest expression. Here we meet a paradox arising from a collision between a largely moral responsibility to present an ideal of love, and an artistic responsibility which compels Trollope to deny the ideal in actual characters and situations. Thus we find the novelist setting up a catalogue of virtues in woman, comprising self denial, charity, fidelity, candour and mildness - the visionary ideal, which he demolishes in nearly every heroine he feels any interest in. At the back of his mind exists the ideal woman, something of a Cordelia or a Beatrice - the traditional redemptive symbol for man to worship as Charley Tudor worships Katie Woodward, referred to in the novel as "angel" and "a child of heaven". Consequently we find Trollope commenting:

Man by instinct desires in his wife something softer,
sweeter, more refined than himself;

making some heroines so perfect that they might easily become abstractions.⁶⁴ Mary Bonner in Ralph the Heir could have been

⁶⁴The Three Clerks, Ch. XXXI, p.374.

"a model for any female saint or martyr"⁶⁵ and Katie Woodward was willing to pine and die for love of Charley. Lily and Bell Dale were conspicuous for their "maidenly modesty"⁶⁶ while Violet Effingham is said to have lacked a certain "sweet, clinging, feminine softness."⁶⁷ A certain amount of male ego is involved here, of course, for Trollope is nothing if not patriarchal as the tone of his pamphlet "On The Higher Education of Women" shows. Perhaps out of sheer masculine vanity he favoured (at least in his novels) portraiture of clinging vines rather than strong-minded, self-assertive spinsters.

When the ivy has found its tower, when the delicate creeper has found its strong wall, we know how the parasite plants grow and prosper. They were not created to stretch forth their branches alone, and endure without protection the summer's sun and the winter's storm.⁶⁸

Added to these personal whims were a number of conventions Trollope respected in the portrayal of young women, which added to the armour of virtue they were required to wear. Modesty dictated that a girl should not know the state of her mind and heart until proposed to. Cecilia Holt in Kept in the Dark found herself in the predicament of not being able to confess her relationship with a cad once Mr. Western had declared his intentions. Mrs. Bold belied

⁶⁵Ralph the Heir, I, Ch. IV, p.61.

⁶⁶The Small House at Allington (1959), Ch. VI, p.68.

(1962)
⁶⁷Phineas Finn, Ch. LXVIII, p.347.

⁶⁸Barchester Towers, Ch. XLIX, p.477.

her name when Mr. Arabin proposed:

"Oh let me go," (she said)... She fled like a roe to her own chamber.⁶⁹

According to convention, love, once recognized and admitted, becomes woman's whole existence and any mishap, even if the girl is innocent, becomes a stain upon her honour. Florence Burton refuses to contemplate any possibility of marriage when she thinks Harry Clavering has deserted her. Even more extreme cases of devotion are presented in Emily Hotspur and in Kate O'Hara of An Eye For An Eye. In Cousin Henry Isabel Broderick finds herself in a quandary for, having once refused to marry a minor canon of Hereford Cathedral on the grounds of her expectation of becoming heir to an estate, she cannot then go back on her word when she learns she is not to be the great lady after all. While in An Old Man's Love Mary Lawrie finds herself honour bound to abide by her promise to Mr. Whittlestaff although her true love begs her to break the engagement. In some ways, as Mario Praz suggested, there is a degree of masochism in these stubborn heroines.⁷⁰ But the matter of devotion in Trollope's heroines is a question of ethics once more. Trollope offers his readers an ideal of conduct in womankind. Devotion, even to an unworthy man, makes a statement on the sacredness of love. And love in its sublime purity and steadfastness thus becomes the moral centre of his work.

⁶⁹ ibid., Ch. XLVIII, p.473.

⁷⁰ M. Praz, The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction (London, 1956), p.309.

It will be seen from the discussion so far that Trollope has in mind a heroine of such virtue that she might be as insubstantial as an angel of light. He is well aware of this danger and remarks in Ayala's Angel that the great fault of novels is that the hero is usually "a very namby-mamby sort of a fellow," and the heroine is "too perfect for human nature."⁷¹ Emily Trevelyan taunts her sister at one point in He Knew He Was Right "You yourself, - you would be a Griselda, I suppose."⁷² She herself is a long way from this symbol of patience. For what happens in most novels is that reality bursts in and insists that the truth must be told. The voice of his artistic conscience tells Trollope that the angel of light does not exist - and if she did Trollope probably would not like her. This is why Mary Flood Jones is silenced for ever at the end of Phineas Finn and perhaps explains also why he referred to Lily Dale as a female prig. Trollope wants to write about flesh and blood. He can, of course, allow his heroes more cakes and ale but in various ways he allows his more vital heroines to escape the symbolic load of virtues they are expected to carry. Florence Burton indulges a very human spirit of jealousy over Julia Ongar, vanity over her appearance when she prepares to meet the Claverings, and exultation in her final victory over Harry. One is tempted to conclude, therefore, that although Trollope is

⁷¹ Ayala's Angel, Ch. XXXVIII, p.363.

⁷² He Knew He Was Right, Ch. XI, p.93.

often caught between the claims of ideal womanhood and the reality of feminine psychology, the latter generally gains the upper hand; not always, however, much as he scorns the ethereal romance (Lizzie Eustace with her Corsair) Trollope sometimes indulges his own dream of ideal womanhood. To this extent I think some characters both male and female are swamped by the weight of goodness they are forced to convey. This certainly seems to be true of Mary Lowther, Lucy Morris, Roger Carbury, Arthur Fletcher, Mr. Arabin, and John Grey, all of whom are inhumanly stoical at times. Sometimes too the extent of virtuous devotion and high-mindedness is unbearable, as in Marion Fay where the heroine's self-abnegation is only matched by the hero's extraordinary patience. The novel ends with what is perhaps the most absurd scene in Trollope, as the hero, Lord Hampstead steals from the chamber with an object concealed under his coat - the poker his dead love had once held in her hand. Fortunately such errors of judgement are few, because of Trollope's passion for accurate observation. So the most successful portrayals occur where he follows his instinct for conveying the mixed motives and responses of men and women.

Thus his most credible figures among his young heroes are men like Phineas Finn, Harry Clavering, Frank Greystock, well-intentioned waverers and back-sliders in the lists of love. Similarly, the most memorable of his young heroines are variously culpable and escape from the doll's house by their independence and will-power.

And behind their headstrong waywardness, the result of Trollope's observation, one senses a strong element of sexuality. Lady Glencora's nature is profoundly passionate and the physical side of her relationship with Burgo Fitzgerald is clearly brought out; it is also a strong element of the attraction and repulsion exercised upon her less passionate husband. A number of Trollope heroines exude sexuality- Julia Brabazon, Lizzie Eustace, and Arabella Trefoil. For Trollope well knew that the "angel of light" in his stories of young love (to a great extent in his best loved Barsetshire novels) was but a dream. More important, it did not even provide the basis for a good working partnership. As one reads of the marriages in his work, the Farnivals, the older Claverings, the Grantlys, even the Proudies, one can only ask where has the angel of light gone. Here are the real people, bickering, confiding, scoring points off one another, making up again. In the Kennedys and the Trevelyanys one is even more conscious of the realities: had Emily Trevelyan or Laura Kennedy been anything like angels of light their marriages would not have ended in tragedy. But they were normal, independent women, who had the misfortune to make incompatible unions.⁷³

Thus the ideal of absolute loyalty, fidelity, meekness can be seen as an illusion, although it is by no means an irrelevancy. It

⁷³This topic is discussed in my next chapter.

informs Trollope's thinking about his characters so that he can justly claim that "no girl has risen from the ~~reading~~ of my pages less modest than she was before."⁷⁴ He once described novels to a Liverpool audience as "the sermons of the present day"⁷⁵ and regarded himself as "a professor who had many pupils of both sexes"⁷⁶ to consider. However, he had also to consider his integrity as an artist and to tell the truth. As he recalled Hawthorne's praise of his work he said:

I have always desired to "hew out some lump of the earth," and to ~~make~~ men and women walk upon it just as they do walk here among us, - with not more of excellence, nor with exaggerated baseness, - so that my readers might recognize human beings like to themselves, and ~~not~~ feel themselves to be carried away among gods or demons.⁷⁷

The Barsetshire heroines are not goddesses certainly, but at certain times they look as though they might sprout wings. It is the skill in their portrayal and as Hawthorne so rightly said, the teeming life surrounding them, which keeps them on the ground. Perhaps also the very force of character they project saves them from being plaster saints like Mary Flood Jones. Perhaps after all Trollope comes near to sustaining the angel of light symbol in the Barsetshire heroines who so often combine the Cordelia qualities, simplicity which is strength, silence which is true

⁷⁴Autobiography, Ch. VIII, p.126.

⁷⁵Reported by The Times (14 November 1873), p.10.

⁷⁶ibid.

⁷⁷Autobiography, Ch. VIII, p.125.

serenity, love which is unalterable. In them it seems that tropological significance is in tune with realism of portrayal. Trollope's technique in character drawing here is to bring out the vitality of his heroines by stressing a detail, such as a glance of the eye or something in the smile. Katie Woodward, for example, is described as a "delightfully feminine" creature. She could be untidy, "but her very untidiness was inviting".⁷⁸ By a simple trick of observation Trollope portrays the subtle beauty of his heroines without recourse to obvious physical allurements. Excessively noticeable beauty in point of fact is usually a fault. The adjective "Junoesque" usually prepares us for a superb physical specimen whose hauteur, ambition or vanity will lead her into trouble. Lady Dumbello is a Juno type, and so are Caroline Waddington, Julia Brabazon, and Arabella Trefoil.

Furthermore realism is heightened by the colouring and detail of the social chorus which plays its part in influencing the behaviour of lovers: a cloud of curates and a gaggle of cousins or aunts, social climbers and drawing-room butterflies, bullied lady companions and domineering dowagers, raffish officers and loquacious politicians, ogling attorneys and aging ogres. Thus we see the young lovers in the context of foils and innumerable referents like Griselda Grantlyor Clementina Golightly, the Misses

⁷⁸The Three Clerks, Ch. XXXI, p.375. Compare the description of Mary Thorne in which Trollope skilfully flatters his readers, Dr. Thorne (1963), Ch. III, p.42.

French or Miss Dunstable. These characters of the social chorus are important also for conveying the moral tone of each novel. Trollope's young people do not on the whole mature in self-knowledge; they are endowed with static moral qualities. The heroines having recognized and acknowledged love, then wait to be claimed like left luggage at a railway station; the heroes may philander a little or indulge in various dissipations until they are saved by the unswerving devotion of the heroine, whereupon they are garlanded and led to the sacrifice.⁷⁹ But it is the pressure of the social chorus which re-establishes the norms and brings the errant lovers back to the fold.⁸⁰

The two novels I now wish to examine illustrate the points I have been making about realism in character and its relation to ideals of conduct and show how the society moulds and guides the actions of the central figures. The Bertrams, moreover, is rather unusual in that it makes some attempt to trace the maturing effect of love on a young man, unlike The Claverings considered next, which follows the more usual course of social convention influencing the hero's behaviour and causing him to return to his rightful love.

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⁷⁹One of the clichés of romance Trollope over-works is that of the calculation of the female angling for her catch and the

The Bertrams has never been well thought of by Trollopians, and even when it appeared it had limited success, although the Athenaeum found something to praise in its "real flesh-and-blood vitality" of his characters⁸¹ and the Saturday Review commended it for its plot.⁸² Sadleir treated it roughly: "a considerable literary failure... lop-sided, cumbrous in humour and informative in landscape-background."⁸³ This is too harsh a condemnation, as I shall show. Walpole came nearer to a just estimate, for although he numbered it among Trollope's five worst novels, he still found in it "a sort of bitterness on the tongue."⁸⁴ Among modern critics, Cockshut virtually ignores it; Booth makes approving sounds at its hints of marital tension, but notes that "nothing less than a complete overhauling can give it form."⁸⁵

bachelor heading for the slaughter. David Aitken pointed out that such clichés "seem to be subversive of the very domesticity which it was his [Trollope's] avowed purpose to defend and celebrate" ("A Kind of Felicity": some notes about Trollope's style, N.C.F., XX, 4 (Mar. 1966), p.352. We need not take this point too seriously, any more than we should the happy endings of his love stories. The real subversion occurs in studies of marital failure and mature personalities considered in my next chapter.

⁸⁰ Characters are often made to act according to what Trollope terms in The Belton Estate "the weights and measures of society" (1964), (Ch. XXV, p.323). Or, as R.M.Adams said in an article on Orley Farm (1964), "The way of the world is Trollope's touchstone," (N.C.F., VIII, 1 (June, 1953), p.39). This is increasingly less ^{true} of his later works, and remarkably of He Knew He Was Right, and The Way We Live Now.

⁸¹ The Athenaeum, 1639 (26 March, 1859), p.420.

⁸² The Saturday Review, VII (26 March, 1859), pp. 368-9.

⁸³ Sadleir, Commentary, p.385.

⁸⁴ Hugh Walpole, Anthony Trollope (London, 1928), p.122.

⁸⁵ Booth, p.116.

Its most glaring faults in arbitrary changes of character and extraneous incidents must be admitted, but its merits should not be overlooked. In the first place it is not quite the chaos some critics have declared it to be; it has its unity of time, theme and plot - or rather plots, for as in so many novels Trollope proceeds on several interlinked plot lines linked to the overall theme of what constitutes the kind of productive love on which a marriage can be based, and how ambition, power, and money destroy the individual's chance of happiness. Much is said also of a problem coming more to Trollope's attention - the growing freedom of women and their problems in an evolving society.⁸⁶ The social question raised by the novel is how to retain ideals and integrity in a society increasingly involved in acquisitiveness and getting ahead, perhaps the greatest question of the Victorian novel at mid-century and for the next twenty years. At the centre is George Bertram, a highly principled young man, troubled by ambition himself, tempted by the wealth of his cynical uncle, and tormented by love for a strong-minded woman, Caroline Waddington.

Whether by accident or design it is hard to determine, but Trollope engages our attention in George from the first with a character which hints at dark, destructive qualities. It is distinctly possible that he changed his mind about George, for at the

⁸⁶ For further comment see my Chapter Five, pp. 207-11.

beginning of the novel he is a disagreeable, unpleasant individual. He is a Disraelian hero, tempted by the snares of the world, and closer in spirit to the charming Henry Harcourt than to Arthur Wilkinson. In Disraelian terms Trollope shows us a situation in which life is one long competitive examination dominated by the philosophy of the devil take the hindmost.

Let us have strength and speed. And how shall we know who are strong and swift if we do not train our horses to run against each other? But this early racing will hardly produce that humanity of spirit of which we now deplore the want. "The devil take the hindmost" is the very essence of the young man's book of proverbs. The devil assuredly will take all the hindmost. None but the very foremost can enter the present heaven of good things.⁸⁷

George, with his double-first at Oxford, is well prepared for "the swimming match of life" and considers a political career. Clearly we are in the presence of a young hero who offers more than the figures of Trollope's conventional love stories, for young George Bertram is caught between the claims of his ideals and conscience and the claims of worldly advance.

The novel concerns itself from the beginning with the sundering of trust brought about by the commercial and competitive spirit as revealed in the actions of several of the characters, particularly Harcourt who violates common bonds of friendship in stealing Caroline Waddington from George, and old Bertram, the miser, an unregenerate

⁸⁷The Bertrams, I, Ch. I, p.4.

Martin Chuzzlewit. Money dominates nearly every action and every character in one way or another. Old Bertram sits at the centre of the web, "a notable man in the city of London" a director of the Bank of England, a stockholder of several companies, and a man in whom all feeling seems to have dried up. Surrounded by hangers-on, notably his brother Sir Lionel, he trusts no one, and one of the book's nicest ironies is the chapter "Bidding High" (II, IX) when he tries to buy George's promise to renew his suit of Caroline; it is the confrontation of integrity and calculation. George will not sacrifice his integrity and old Bertram dies without naming him his heir, leaving his fortune out of pique to a charitable institution. Trollope's comment on him is that "the iron of his wealth had entered into his very soul."⁸⁸

The circumstances of the Wilkinson family are also part of the money theme. Lord Stapledean, who holds the living to which Arthur aspires, is of the same mould as Old Bertram: "What I want I pay for, and am indebted for nothing," he says.⁸⁹ Accepting the living on terms that give his mother control of the stipend Arthur pays for his folly. Rapidly we see how Mrs. Wilkinson becomes morally

⁸⁸ ibid., III, Ch. XIV, p.277.

⁸⁹ ibid., I, Ch. III, p.59.

tainted by the situation, which has the effect also of preventing the too prudent clergyman from marrying Adela Gauntlet. This in itself echoes the principal love story which balances true love with barter in human relationships. Caroline virtually sells herself to Henry Harcourt having declared "I would not for worlds of gold marry a man I did not love."⁹⁰ Fortune has, however, played its part in her rejection of George Bertram, for she has confided in Adela:

"What would four hundred a year do in London? Were I to consent, in a year or two he would be sick of me."⁹¹

This is paralleled ironically by Adela's situation, for she has lost Arthur on similar grounds, yet was prepared to marry on a much lesser income. Caroline's dependence on financial status has already been made clear in Chapter Eleven:

She would never marry - such was the creed which was to govern her own life - without love; but she would not allow herself to love where love would interfere with her high hopes... she knew that no figure in the world could be made without means.⁹²

She does, it seems, quite arbitrarily, marry Harcourt without love, almost an act of wilful self-destruction, and the casual way in which the marriage is referred to enhances the impression of its suicidal nature. Clearly there is more to Caroline than mere ambition and love of wealth. She has great pride and masculine drive.⁹³ She

⁹⁰ibid., I, Ch. XV, p.318.

⁹¹ibid.

⁹²ibid., I, Ch. X, pp. 219-20. There is much irony in the fact that Adela's suffering came from "passion nipped in its bud by a cruel

bears the blow of separation from George with "iron stubbornness".⁹⁴ On the subject of her broken engagement she tells Adela that Bertram had to be master in all things, "but I could not permit this".⁹⁵ And gradually we see that her calmness and discretion were a delusion. "Passionate love, I take it," she tells Harcourt confidently, "rarely lasts long"⁹⁶ but then her own passion brings her to the brink of collapse. Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat. Even suicide becomes a possibility. With more courage Trollope could have pursued this darkening psychological case, but he turns instead to an utterly improbable solution with the timely death of Harcourt and Caroline's transformation to the meek and dutiful girl who will marry George Bertram, a suitably trite dénouement in keeping with this sentiment:

Ah! young ladies, sweet young ladies, dear embryo mothers of our England as it will be, think not over-much of your lovers' incomes. He that is true and honest will not have to beg his bread - neither his nor yours.... If a wholesome loaf on your tables, and a strong arm round your waists, and a warm heart to lean on cannot make you happy, you are not the girls for whom I take you.⁹⁷

prudence" (II, Ch. II, p.20) while Caroline paid the penalty for the over-abundance of "reason and measure in her love" (ibid., p.26).

⁹³See my Chapter Five, pp. 211-4.

⁹⁴The Bertrams, II, Ch. VIII, p.179.

⁹⁵ibid., p.183.

⁹⁶ibid., II, Ch. XIII, pp. 297-8.

⁹⁷ibid., III, Ch. V., p.104.

It should be noted, however, that in The Bertrams we find Trollope engaged in what were to become vital concerns of his fiction: the consequences of an unhappy marriage, and the conflict of natures in a love affair. The bewilderment and anger on George's part and Caroline's own frustrated pride are skilfully brought out, as for example in the scene in which Bertram reproaches her for showing his letter to Harcourt. The ensuing quarrel is inevitable and the height of folly. Neither can retract or apologize and the scene is handled with such care that we feel Trollope has broken altogether from the limits of a romantic tale to explore the bizarre consequences of a wilful adherence to a course of action against one's interests and destructive of happiness, hinting in the process at a certain self-destructive element in a relationship as close as this. There is a subtlety also in the way Trollope has her reveal herself unconsciously:

I have always thought that there was much in the world worth the living for besides love. Ambition needs not be a closed book for women, unless they choose to close it. I do not see but that a statesman's wife may stand nearly as high in the world as the statesman stands himself. Money, position, rank are worth the having - at any rate, the world thinks so, or why else do they so scramble for them? I will not scramble for them; but if they come in my way, why, I may probably pick them up.⁹⁸

Much is conveyed here of Caroline's mixed emotions which drive her to marry Harcourt.

⁹⁸ibid., II, Ch. VIII, pp. 184-5.

As for the rest of the novel there is little to be said of its digressionary travels, except that George's expedition to the Holy Land emphasises his spiritual-material problems. On the Mount of Olives he decides to become a clergyman, and this resolve is immediately dashed in the meeting with Caroline. The religious scene undercuts the ideal and spiritual with pictures of squalor and human meanness, including a reference to Christ and the moneychangers. Twice George sees beautiful women - physical distractions from his spiritual quest. The first is described at the Tabernacle acquitting herself of sins in a proud and joyous manner - the second more plainly a foreshadowing of Caroline, a proud Jewess of whom he says: "If I knew how to set about the bargain, I would take that woman home with me, and mould her to be my wife."⁹⁹ From such hints I would suggest that the Holy Land scenes contribute to the broad thematic unity of this little known novel.

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Like The Bertrams, The Claverings centres on a marriage for wealth and position, but it shows greater breadth and subtlety of characterisation than the earlier novel. But again like The Bertrams it is not a complete success. Its chief merits lie in

⁹⁹ibid., I, Ch. IX, p.196.

the presentation of the chief characters, Harry Clavering, Julia Brabazon, and the various branches of the Clavering and Burton families, all of whom are observed with well judged irony.

Michael Sadleir said that The Claverings was "as surely conceived as any book"¹⁰⁰ Trollope wrote, but I would dispute this; I find it deficient in this respect, once the excitement of Harry's moth to the flame romance with Julia and the comic complications with Sophie Gordeloup and Archie Clavering have been dealt with. For the last third of the novel fresh twists to the plot are not forthcoming, and the characters spend more and more time bemoaning their fates and grimly looking into the future. Perhaps this is what caused Walpole to find "a darker air and more sinister surroundings" in the book.¹⁰¹ It is not the sure conception of plot that gives the novel its weight, but the interesting characterisation, particularly of Harry Clavering.

Far from being "one of the feeblest, most vacillating, and least interesting of all the Trollope heroes,"¹⁰² as Walpole called him, Harry is certainly one of the most significant studies of the young man in love in all of Trollope's work. Walpole is equally wide of the mark when he says that no one pays any attention

¹⁰⁰ Sadleir, Commentary, p.391.

¹⁰¹ Walpole, p.130.

¹⁰² ibid., p.132.

to the insipid love affairs of the novel. On the contrary they are intense and real, most touchingly rendered and closely observed with a great deal of truth to life. The love interest in The Claverings seems to me to illustrate several issues discussed in this chapter and the presentation of Harry Clavering and the two women in his life shows clearly what Trollope felt about the proper basis for marriage, and the difficulties involved in young love.

Trollope himself recorded that Julia was his central character, but in fact the novel is much richer than a study of mercenary marriage and inevitable retribution, if we consider the events from the Clavering angle, particularly Harry's. Harry is handsome, proud, and smug, and petted by the Clavering household; he is charming if rather brainless and has a touching naiveté about women and adult society in general. Harry Clavering is a more vital conception of the hobbledoys like Johnny Eames or Charley Tudor; though he is still immature he is sexually aware to the highest degree, and it is sex appeal which draws him to Julia Brabazon. It is the conflict between his highly developed conscience and the sexual drive which provides the drama in Harry's situation, later in the book. Allied with this sexual development of the character there is an important social aspect to the novel. Harry is an innocent in a world of more sophisticated and cynical adults. He will pay Julia's debts in one grand quixotic gesture; his father and the other Claverings are highly money-conscious. So, as the story develops,

we see Harry struggling not only with sexual desires, but with the difficulties any adolescent has in making his place in the adult world. He has to endure his father's slightly acid chaffing about Florence's background; feeling superior to Theodore Burton he nevertheless is conscious of the man's integrity and good nature. Harry seems destined to be caught on the wrong foot. When he would lecture Saul on the impropriety of his attachment to Fanny he is completely overcome. When he would display his social accomplishment to Pateroff at his club, he is humbled by the older man's savoir faire. Harry is, in short, a portrayal of the young man growing up, observed with more psychological depth than any hero of Trollope's prior to 1867.

Harry's love for Julia at the start is characterised by adolescent impulsiveness. And when she rejects him he

sauntered out all alone into the park, intending
to indulge in reminiscences of his past romance. ¹⁰³

We are not told much of the circumstances by which Harry came under the spell of Florence Burton but to judge from his conversation he has added little to his store of wisdom in the sixteen months or so that elapsed after his farewell to Julia. Indeed his love of both women at this point is of the same unreal, narcissistic quality, for we read

¹⁰³ The Claverings, CH. II, p.9.

His only objection to Florence was that she had come to him so much in the ordinary course.¹⁰⁴

Thus irony seems to be intended in the drawing of Harry for most of the novel, at its most sublime in Chapter XLI, "The Sheep Returns to the Fold" when the repentant swain sits miserably in the Burton circle being passed from hand to hand, as it were, like a brown paper parcel. The book might perhaps have made its point more strongly if Harry's growth to manhood had been effectively rendered; but as so often, alas, Trollope provides a formula solution with Harry destined for rank, fortune, and domestic felicity.

Harry Clavering is in many ways a fool, and from what we learn of him early on we know that he is putty in Julia's hands; yet at the same time Trollope gives him many likeable qualities. He is frank and at bottom, highly principled, and he suffers mightily for his sexual desires and his betrayal of Florence's trust; he is a worthier man than his father and his uncle Sir Hugh Clavering, whose mercenary attitudes are really no different from Julia's. But we must always bear in mind that he is a young man in the grip of sexual drives, a young man swimming for the first time in a sea of adult responses and pressures - an aspect of the novel which is particularly responsible for its rich texture of irony: the rapacious set surrounding Julia, the sane and worthy Burtons influencing Harry, the socially conscious Claverings exerting their own pressure

¹⁰⁴ ibid., Ch. V., p.51.

on Fanny. Consider, for example, how Harry's relationship with Florence is weighed, measured, and to a great extent, dictated, by the enticements of the peace and order reigning at Onslow Terrace. Earlier, we are told, it had irked Harry greatly to be cast in the role of last in a long line of suitors for the Burton daughters. This kind of background thickens the texture of the novel and makes us respond agreeably to the scene of Harry's return to Florence:

He hardly knew what he was doing as he ran up the steps to the drawing-room. He was afraid of what was to come; but nevertheless he rushed at his fate as some young soldier rushes at the trench in which he feels that he may probably fall. So Harry Clavering hurried on, and before he had looked round upon the room which he had entered, found his fate with Florence on his bosom.¹⁰⁵

It is a familiar outcome of a very ordinary romance, but at the same time Trollope touches a spring of common experience which goes to the heart, and this is his great gift. This controlled irony of presentation noticeable in The Claverings places the novel nearer in spirit to Jane Austen than, as Walpole suggests, to Thackeray, and is part of the book's appeal.

If, as I have said, the plot fails to provide sufficient unity to the novel, there is nonetheless a unity of theme which comes from the punishment exacted upon Julia, the love of Fanny and Saul, and the tranquillity of the Burton household, seen in relation

¹⁰⁵ibid., Ch. XLI, p.437.

to the machinations of Sir Hugh and Archie Clavering, the misery of the relationship between Sir Hugh and Hermione. Through these inter-connected groups Trollope pursues his theme, that marriage based on any other motive than pure love is doomed to failure: Lady Ongar's wealth becomes ashes in the mouth, while her sister Hermy, having contracted a marriage with Sir Hugh Clavering on prudent considerations, is bullied and humiliated. Lady Ongar is the prey of fortune hunters and base intriguers. Even the good-hearted, but lazy clergyman, Henry Clavering, brings money and class issues to bear when he evaluates both Harry's match with Florence, and Fanny's with Saul. "He isn't quite one of our sort," Harry's comment on Saul at the end of the novel is a stroke of irony, which clearly indicates certain spiritual deficiencies in the Clavering household.¹⁰⁶

Saul, in fact, plays a vital part in the novel, for he is in many ways the opposite of Harry. In appearance ugly and shabbily dressed, while Harry is handsome and personable, Saul has a code which Trollope presents as the proper basis for marriage. In an important section of the novel, Ch. XXVIII, Trollope states that a man's feelings for the woman he is to marry should consist of much more than love (by which he here means sexual passion) and he lists such attributes as chivalry, male protectiveness, a strong sense of duty. Saul has these qualities, Harry is deficient in them. This

¹⁰⁶ ibid., Ch. XLVIII, p.510.

has been made clear in Ch. XXV: "It was his duty to stick to Florence."¹⁰⁷ Trollope shows his hero walking in Piccadilly teaching himself by "false, cowardly logic" that he should abandon Florence, and here we come to an ambiguity which is hard to resolve. Trollope finds some excuse for his hero in Ch. XXVIII:

When a true man has loved with all his heart and all his soul, - does he cease to love, - does he cleanse his heart of that passion when circumstances run against him, and he is forced to turn elsewhere for his life's companion?¹⁰⁸

He gives a firm No to this question, but when this passage is put alongside his comments in Ch. XXV some inconsistency is revealed:

No man ceases to love without a cause. No man need cease to love without a cause. A man may maintain his love, and nourish it, and keep it warm by honest manly effort, as he may his probity, his courage, or his honour.¹⁰⁹

I am sure this is Trollope's true voice, but what sense does it make of Harry's dilemma in love? On the one hand it is implied that the first love (Julia) cannot be forgotten, and on the other hand, that by some Victorian remedy such as a cold bath or a run on the heath Harry should have quelled his passion. Trollope is either uncertain or else his nerve fails him, for he has in Julia and Harry two highly passionate natures whose relationship is always being spoken of in (for Trollope) sensual terms. Beneath the lines of Chapters XXV and XXI can be discerned the most blatantly

¹⁰⁷ ibid., Ch. XXV, p.258.

¹⁰⁸ ibid., Ch. XXVIII, p.296.

¹⁰⁹ ibid., Ch. XXV, p.259.

sexual force in all of Trollope's work (with the possible exception of the Glencora-Burgo scenes in Can You Forgive Her?) . But does Trollope avoid the issue finally? At first one is inclined to think that he does and regret that he did not unite Harry and Julia in some antipodean haven. "Human truth as to men and women" seems to have been sacrificed to suit public susceptibilities. Harry must take his cold bath and Julia renounce him in the grand manner:

"Go and see Florence Burton; and if, when you see her, you find that you ~~an~~ love her, take her to your heart, and be true to her. You shall never hear another reproach from me."¹¹⁰

The utterance rings falsely like a speech from an average sensation romance. One senses that realism has given way to moral concern and Trollope's angel of light idealism. Yet we have surely known all along that a match between Julia and Harry would have been against the moral tone of the novel. Women who have committed the unpardonable sin of marrying without love are always destined for unhappiness. And we are also aware that Florence is a fully developed character whose virtues are presented with positive force. Thus the compromise Trollope makes does not seem the betrayal of truth it first appeared, but ^{an} almost successful vindication of his love ethic. The reservation has to be made however, for the book cannot be judged a total success. Harry Clavering, torn between physical desire for

¹¹⁰ ibid., Ch. XXV, p.266.

Julia and remorse over Florence holds our interest for two-thirds of the novel, but we expect the crisis in Chapter XXIV to bring about some maturity in him and when it does not our interest tends to flag. Harry goes on shilly-shallying until the Burtons and his own mother bring him back to paths of virtue.

But there are many good points about the novel too. The comedy is often first-rate among a number of well drawn minor characters, chiefly Sophie Gordeloup and Count Pateroff. These have been praised by critics I think with more warmth than they deserve. My preference has always been for Archie Clavering and Captain Boodle. No one equals Trollope in the depiction of vacuous men-about-town until Waugh and Wodehouse, and it is hard to find a funnier scene than Archie's lesson in the art of love based on Boodle's equine metaphor "Let her know that you're there." By contrast Trollope offers a sombre picture of Hermy and Sir Hugh, one of several studies of marital disaster I consider in my next chapter. Their barren marriage is seen alongside the warmth of the Burton household, constantly reminding us of the implications for Harry, poised as he is between Florence and Julia (the sister of Lady Hermine). As so often in Trollope moments of vital observation are passed over and understated, as when Hermy distorts the memory of her callous husband once he has died. Trollope's eye for the inconsistencies and irrationalities of human behaviour is always keen and is particularly acute in this novel: Julia's impulsive abandonment of all

the material goods she had sacrificed herself for, Harry's perverse involvement with her against his better nature; Fanny's change of heart towards Mr. Saul are typical examples. An instinctive apprehension of the vagaries of human behaviour, particularly in love, lies beneath the simple surfaces of Trollope's fiction and must be considered as a significant part of his achievement.

Chapter Four

THE BREAD AND CHEESE

Marriage transforms a distraction into a support, the power of which should be, and happily often is, in direct proportion to the degree of imbecility it supplants.¹

Hardy's epigram has decided relevance to Trollope's depiction of love before and after marriage. As I pointed out in my previous chapter he tended to regard youthful enchantment and romance - the experience, essentially, of puppy love - as necessary preparation for the real working out of human relationships against the stable background of marriage, home, work and satisfying avocations. The pangs and ecstasies of young love are necessary and pleasant, but real life begins with the responsibilities of a family and a career. Alaric Tudor's maturity is bound up with the final realisation of Gertrude's devotion; and his future satisfaction will come from the unremitting labour for his family in Australia. Similarly, we are told in Ayala's Angel that if Frank Houston and Imogene Docimer are to find happiness it will come from hard work and a cradle filled annually. One would like to feel some irony was intended, but it is not. Trollope is wholly

¹Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd, I (The Mellstock Edition, London, 1919), Ch. IV, p.28.

committed to the Victorian ideals of family life and the labour we should all delight in. This is what he means by his metaphor, the "bread and cheese" of love. As he put it in Rachel Ray:

... ease of spirit comes from action only, and the world's dignity is given to those who do the world's work. Let no man put his neck from out of the collar till in truth he can no longer draw the weight attached to it.²

What he most admired about the Canadians and the Americans when he travelled to their countries was the effort they put into their labour. However, my purpose in this chapter is not to deal with Trollope's devotion to the fulfilment of man in his work, but to his fulfilment within marriage and the home. I shall draw illustrations from several of his lesser known novels and finally comment on Orley Farm and He Knew He Was Right.

Trollope felt that the "rocks and valleys" of love were a necessary prelude to the maturing of the man and woman in marriage, of which his own experience had given him proof. Thus in the novels dealing with mature love we come to the heart of Trollope's fiction. Henry James found Trollope one of the most trustworthy of the writers "who have helped the heart of man to know itself"³ and of no segment of his work is this more true than of his depiction of marriage and family life.

²Rachel Ray (1924), Ch. XXVIII, pp. 370-1.

³Henry James, Partial Portraits, p.133.

The proverbial wisdom expounded in The Eustace Diamonds, "Doan't thou marry for munny, but goa where munny is!"⁴ well expresses the compromise Trollope is always urging between the rocks and valleys and the bread and cheese. But as we noticed in the preceding chapter, there was a certain ambiguity in which Trollope presented ideals of feminine behaviour which conflicted strangely with the psychologies of the girls he understood so well. Such ambiguities are less noticeable in Trollope's presentation of older men and women. Perhaps he sees his subjects more clearly, or perhaps, feeling more intensely involved with his material, he is less prone to compromises and arbitrary turns of character.

Consider his general presentation of marriage and home - the home of Judge Staveley, for example, an oasis of calm amid the hurly-burly of industrial England. Outside, materialism may be rampant, but here there is peace, order and stability. It is a cell of good living, and one could extend this idea to embrace the village community presided over by a benevolent squire and parson. This is the background which creates an atmosphere of serenity and confidence behind so many of Trollope's novels. As we shall see Trollope did not retreat at all from the facts of

⁴The Eustace Diamonds, (1849), Ch. XIII, p.121.

bad homes and disastrous marriages, but the ideal represented is not so much at variance with the facts as that of the "angel of light" discussed in the preceding chapter. The ideal of companionship in marriage and through the family is more realistically relevant and possible, because it has to be striven for by hard work and a long process of education. In fact, I should say that Trollope rather emphasises the difficulty of mastering the really important lessons of love which come after the courtship period. And in this he is very truthful, of course. His honesty compels him to look at the conflicts of personalities bound together in marriage, and in consequence we have an impression frequently of the home as a battleground as well as a sanctuary. We remember the Trevellyans or the Kennedys locked in combat, or the Furnivals slowly withering away with boredom, or the Germain and Scarborough families divided, and often unhappy. In fact the concentration in Trollope's pictures of marriage is closer in spirit to Meredith's "Modern Love" than to Patmore's "The Angel in the House". The angel belongs to the stories of young love and does not survive the realities of making a marriage work.

Yet the ideal is not destroyed. In this respect Patricia Thomson was correct in referring to Trollope as the high priest of marriage. She over-simplified the matter in suggesting that his novels flatter Victorian prejudices about relations between the sexes:

It was on reading Trollope that Victorians must have felt their ideal of wifely submission was in its finest hour.⁵

It is perfectly true that wives are often seen flattering the male ego. One form such devotion takes is in deferring to a husband's powers of thought and judgement. A certain irony may be noticed in the fact that almost superhuman ignorance is required of the female to take second place to the minds of some of the heroes as husbands. The ~~Rev.~~ ^{Reverend} Mark Robarts and his wife are a case in point. Frequently, of course, the wives are patently more spirited, capable and intelligent, and by implication at least Trollope sympathises with their situation in a man's world. Certainly some criticism is being levelled at a situation which compels so many women to subordinate themselves in various ways or to scheme their way into matrimony, and through strong-minded characters like Julia Brabazon, Caroline Waddington, and even Lizzie Eustace, Trollope is making a statement on women's behalf. Take the case of Mabel Grex in The Duke's Children. Here is a woman apparently too proud and honest to attach herself to a man of inferior intellect, but having missed her chance with one of the lords of creation has to suffer the grim punishment of spinsterhood. Admittedly she nurses a secret love for her cousin, Frank Tregear, but there is more than a glimmer of pity in Trollope's

⁵Patricia Thomson, The Victorian Heroine, A Changing Ideal, 1837-1873 (London, 1956), p.111.

presentation of this high-spirited and finally broken-hearted woman. Indeed Trollope's sympathies for the woman seem to come out strongly in this particular novel in reminders of Glencora Palliser, Lady Mary, Mrs. Finn and Isabel Boncassen. The contrast between these spirited souls and a gallery of weak-minded males increases the irony; Lord Popplecourt, Dolly Longestaffe, Reginald Dobbies, Lord Silverbridge himself, make a wretched showing, and Frank Tregear does little to inspire our belief in the many qualities Plantaganet professes to find in him at the end of the novel. I suggest, therefore, that although Trollope approved of male supremacy as an axiom of married life he was considerably at variance with the popular concept of marriage, and exposed, often obliquely in his novels, issues in relations between the sexes and between parents and children, which produced explosions at the turn of the century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. To see Trollope as the high priest of marriage it is necessary to recognize how he undermines received ideas about male superiority and how warmly he advances the female's point of view. He was too fair-minded to go the whole patriarchal hog.

That this is acknowledged to some extent by Miss Thomson in her comments on Trollope in her study of the Victorian heroine is corroborated by her statement quoted below, which neatly expresses Trollope's ability to find the workable compromise, the ability to

strike a balance. In this instance it is a matter of giving credit both to female intelligence and male pride, in which Miss Thompson finds a synthesis of drives and duties which constitute, if not an ideal, certainly a workable marriage.

It was by marriage, and by marriage only, that women could exercise their supremacy, and he Trollope considered that only by sublimation of herself through her husband and children could a woman ever bring her full powers of influence for good into action. As far as he knew, there were no deep chords in women that a judicious marriage would not bring into harmony with life... And yet, despite Trollope's determined anti-feminism, his own ideal of marriage, if it does not include equality, is found, on examination, not to fall far short of Mill's other demands of 'community of interests and likeness of intellects'.⁶

That last comment indicates a remarkable degree of understanding in Trollope, and it is a fortunate addition to Miss Thomson's case which otherwise pays insufficient regard to the novelist's sympathy for the woman in marriage. The case I wish to make now is that we should not pay too much attention to Trollope's "determined anti-feminism", but concentrate on what he shows us of right and wrong attitudes to marriage, and how much emphasis is placed on compromise, tolerance and lack of egotism for both parties. As he says in He Knew He Was Right, "When people are married, they must put up with something; - at least, most always."⁷

⁶ ibid.

⁷ He Knew He Was Right, (1863) Ch. XXIX, p.274.

Trollope is not so much the advocate of "wifely submission" but the sympathetic observer of what Henry James called "the ravages of love."³

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Drawing general conclusions about home and marriage from novels written over some thirty-five years is a hazardous task. The sheer bulk of Trollope's work involves such variety of presentation that one grows chary of isolating a single trend or a definite pattern of approach. Critics have blamed Trollope for his prodigality, but it has also to be remembered that scale often provides a meaningful total picture of the way we live. What common denominators are to be found among the Grantlys, the Proudies, the Pallisers, the Claverings, the Crawleys or the Kennedys? Generally, like should mate with like. But in the case of the Trevelyan, who married for love, the irrational in human nature resulted in catastrophe, each contributing with masochistic enjoyment to the destruction of the marriage. In the Furnivals' case, difference of social origins, at first of no consequence, almost brought about a separation. Both examples represent truthful perspectives on single marriages, but point to no clearcut recipe for avoiding pitfalls or establishing a happy

³James, Portraits, p.109.

relationship.⁹ Nevertheless, like to like is a basic principle. Trollope makes a great deal, especially in his early novels, of the dangers involved in marrying out of one's class. Here the dangers are merely social; the issue one of caste snobbery as in Lady Lufton's objection to Lucy Robarts, and Trollope defers to popular prejudice by lifting the inferior with a legacy or a forgotten title or a sudden elevation in rank as happens in Ralph the Heir.¹⁰ In Lady Anna he flouts convention and has his aristocratic heroine marry a tailor, an unusual gambit since a man scarcely suffers by raising the status of a woman, while a lady marrying into a lower class forfeits much. In stories of this kind the vitality comes not so much from the love affair itself but from tensions in the society surrounding it: "it's the looks on it, ma'am; it's that I mind" says a housemaid in The Three Clerks when her fiancé has run off and married another.¹¹ The *mésalliance* remains an issue in Trollope's fiction, but is taken far less seriously in later novels, an indication of greater social mobility. Rank will ally itself with trade, and Ralph Newton will not suffer if he marries Polly Neefit - "Everybody is doing it now," although

⁹Orley Farm is discussed on pp. 165-177 and He Knew He Was Right on pp. 177-188.

¹⁰ Although he abides by the conventions regarding class distinction Trollope is usually highly critical of snobbery. See his monograph on Thackeray, pp. 81-7.

¹¹The Three Clerks, Ch. XVI, p.175.

Trollope scarcely approves.¹² But by the period of The Duke's Children new vitality is promised in the union of Lord Silverbridge with Isabel Boncassen, the American scholar's daughter, while Frank Tregear, an impecunious gentleman may have his bride, Lady Mary Palliser. Yet the gulf is not after all so wide. Tregear is a gentleman and an M.P. In Marion Fay Lord Hampstead intends to marry the daughter of a City clerk, while his sister engages herself to George Roden, a postal official. Still uneasy at the flouting of caste lines, however, Trollope evades the issue by having Marion Fay die of consumption, and giving Roden the pedigree of an Italian title as the Duca di Crinola.

The class issue is important to Trollope only in so far as it puts greater stress on the problem of personal compatibility in tastes and interests, and social behaviour. The more important issue is temperamental compatibility. The Kennedy marriage was obviously doomed by the dissimilar natures of Laura and Robert. And although Violet Effingham fears that her marriage to Lord Chiltern will fail - "We are too much alike. Each is too violent, too headstrong, and too masterful" - in fact it works very well.¹³ They mellow with age. On the other hand, the match between Plantaganet and Glencora, which started out like a business transaction, with the love all on one side, each nature totally dissimilar, is

¹² Ralph the Heir, I, Ch. V, p.85.

¹³ Phineas Finn, Ch. LXXI, p.379.

shown to be a relationship which grows in mutual regard. Likewise, the Proudie relationship defies categorising. Nagging and domineering are vexations of the spirit, yet - a stroke of genius in The Last Chronicle - the Proudie marriage had not been unhappy. Few scenes are as poignant as that in which the widower Bishop is seen immediately after the virago's death caught between momentary elation at his freedom and horror at his future without her.

Trollope is adept at showing the long-term effects of unhappy marriage, the cold war of attrition by nagging or petty tyranny (on both sides), and the process by which a relationship becomes encrusted and ossified, usually by indifference or neglect. From the woman's point of view physical violence is infinitely more bearable than mental cruelty. Chiltern's blazing temper is decidedly preferable to Sir Hugh Clavering's icy disdain. Trollope sees relationships in marriage rather in the manner of Hawthorne (whose works he knew well) for whom the unpardonable sin was to stand aloof from human contact or to tyrannise over another human creature. Trollope shows most of the harm in marriage is done by one partner exercising a tyrannous will over the other. The ideal marriage, however, is based on subordinating the personal will, the goal is harmonious inter-action of unique qualities of the male and female. Trollope has his own notions of what such qualities are and by enunciating them with his usual candour and toughness he,

in a sense, bypasses the whole question of the equality of the sexes. He takes his stand on a few simple laws, as he sees them, of God and nature. Man has the function of being breadwinner, protector, and woman the function of home-maker, mother. Man is the stronger and by the laws of life the dominant sex, but this does not deny in marriage an equality of leadership; each contributes on equal terms to the creative marriage and the fulfilment of the other. He has no liking for male tyranny, and disputed the inferiority of women in marriage as pretty toys or unpaid servants. Perfect love casts out all pride and egotism (the young with their narcissism and selfishness could hardly know such love) and therefore the delicate balance of marriage could be achieved by those who struggled over a long period. The ideal marriage (if it could be found) was steel tempered in the fire of abnegation, suffering, and renewed aspiration. The Palliser marriage fell short of the ideal, but taken overall it is the highest expression of Trollope's belief in the dignity and value of the marriage relationship.

However, the responsibility for making circumstances exist out of which a harmonious relationship could be created lay heavily on the man's shoulders:

A man should be master in his own house, but he should make his mastery palatable, equitable, smooth, soft to the touch, a thing almost unfelt.¹⁴

¹⁴He Knew He Was Right, Ch. V, p.44.

Yet this does not mean that a wife had to be meek, adoring and obedient. Trollope points out in Is He Popenjoy?, for example, that Lord George must rid himself of a feeling of his "divine superiority" in his role as husband, and when he makes the mistake of putting Adelaide Houghton's letter into his wife's hands he not only provides himself with a salutary experience of begging her forgiveness, but gives her the acutely feminine pleasure of being able to offer her pardon.

Then, and not till then, he is her equal; and equality is necessary for comfortable love. But the man, till he be well used to it, does not like to be pardoned. He has assumed divine superiority, and is bound to maintain it. Then, at last, he comes home some night with a little too much wine, or he cannot pay the weekly bills because he has lost too much money at cards, or he has got into trouble at his office and is in doubt for a fortnight about his place, or perhaps a letter from a lady falls into wrong hands. Then he has to tell himself that he has been 'found out.' The feeling is at first very uncomfortable; but it is, I think, a step almost necessary in reaching true matrimonial comfort. Hunting men say that hard rain settles the ground. A good scold with a 'kiss and be friends' after it, perhaps, does the same.¹⁵

The point of view is male, and the tone a trifle flippant, but the idea governing such an observation is that marriage should not be based on male supremacy. At its best the notion of equality of function is seen in the Grantlys. No one would deny that the Archdeacon is nominally the head of the house, but Mrs. Grantly

¹⁵Is He Popenjoy? (1965), Ch. XXXII, pp. 315-6.

realises her potentialities to the full as councillor of the bed-chamber. In another instance we have Lady Fitzgerald in Castle Richmond providing the warmth and strength her husband needs when he is being harassed by the infamous Molletts. It is simply a matter of a wife being able to express the generosity, intuition and gentleness of which her soul is capable. When her feelings are dammed up, or the expression of her love denied, she senses constriction. Laura Kennedy is a typical example of frustration in this respect.

"There are moments, Robert, when even a married woman must behave herself rather than her husband's wife. It is so, though you cannot understand it."

"I certainly do not understand it."

"You cannot make a woman subject to you as a dog is so. You may have all the outside and as much of the inside as you can master. With a dog you may be sure of both."¹⁶

Recognizing that her husband looks upon her as a bale of goods Laura reacts by instinctively reaching towards Phineas who responds to her womanly qualities and releases her tenderness and generosity. The ramifications of masculine brutality and insensitivity are frequently alluded to in the novels and point to Trollope's disapproval of such aspects of the domestic scene. Where the natural, healthy impulses of the wife are thwarted, where the husband has failed to exercise his manly qualities, discord results. Nowhere

¹⁶Phineas Finn, Ch. XXXIX, p.25.

is this more clearly stated than in Kept In The Dark where the rhythm of equality is disrupted by the tyranny of George Western, whose masculine pride isolates him from his wife, Cecilia. The whole book is an interesting study of the proper basis of marriage. The heroine, Cecilia Holt, has engaged herself to Sir Francis Geraldine, a proud, boastful and selfish man. Neglected past all endurance, and ragged by a ferocious man-hater, Francesca Altifiorla, she jilts Sir Francis. Being essentially mean-spirited and unmanly he wishes to salve his wounds by boasting that he broke off the match. In due time Cecilia meets a shy, almost middle-aged man, George Western, who has himself been jilted. They fall in love and marry, but Cecilia fails to divulge the story of her earlier relationship with Sir Francis. Keeping the secret increases her suffering and the marriage almost collapses when Western discovers the truth. Ironically, it is male pride in himself (not unlike that of Sir Francis) which makes Western exact a terrible retribution. He will not be content until she crawls to him on bended knees. At some points the story looks like a pale imitation of He Knew He Was Right to which it is much inferior in characterisation, but it shows clearly Trollope's disdain for masculine boorishness and egotism exemplified by Sir Francis and Western. His irony shows, for example, in the title given to Chapter XVIII, "A Man's Pride", and Western is satirically treated in the way he shifts his ground from suspecting his wife's integrity to preserving his own

self-respect: "But still, - but still his honour must be saved."¹⁷

"He had a right to command, a right to be obeyed, a right to be master!"¹⁸ and Trollope scorns this type of marriage. A reconciliation is achieved which enables the husband to save face, but Trollope allows his heroine the last word which the justice of her case fully deserves.

Much of Trollope's irony concerning marriage is directed at male egotism. "What man thinks of changing himself so as to suit his wife?" asks Lady Chiltern in Phineas Redux.¹⁹ According to Trollope a successful marriage demands that each must learn to respect the other's feelings, and that a double standard of behaviour is intolerable. This is essentially the situation explored in Is He Popenjoy? in which Lord George Germain's view of matrimony is summed up by the phrase "What a man does is different."²⁰ But Lord George is guilty also of hypocrisy and deceit, which is the most destructive force, not only in marriage, but in all human relationships. By his hypocrisy and lack of principle Lord George forfeits any claim to "manliness" which is the core of Trollope's concept of male character.²¹ In a lengthy authorial comment in

¹⁷Kept In The Dark (1882), II, Ch. XXI, p.172.

¹⁸ibid., p.191.

¹⁹Phineas Redux (1964), Ch. III, p.35.

²⁰Ch. XXXIX, p.70.

²¹For further discussion of this topic see my final chapter, pp. 279-320.

Chapter LXVIII of Phineas Redux Trollope shows that true manliness provides the strength on which a woman can rely, and therefore on which a marriage can be based.²²

The onus clearly lies upon the male in Trollope's view to provide leadership without tyranny, understanding without weakness, manliness without affectation. These are the attributes of Judge Staveley, whose domestic life is something of a model of harmony and freedom. His judicious management of his household represents an ideal, which Trollope cautiously advances in an age when mastery of the home so often meant the total submission of wife and children:

But the judge was an odd man in many of the theories of his life. One of them, with reference to his children, was very odd, and altogether opposed to the usual practice of the world. It was this, - that they should be allowed, as far as was practicable, to do what they liked.²³

Such an observation clearly indicates the direction of Trollope's sympathies towards generosity, affection and tolerance within the family - and the shared responsibilities of man and wife. My case, then, concerning Trollope's depiction of marriage and the home is that the quest is towards a spirit of co-operation and balance between the sexes, a voluntary sinking of personal gratification and an understanding of the role each sex is fitted to play. Discord

²²pp. 302-3.

²³Orley Farm (1970), Ch. XLVII, pp. 70-1.

arises when the delicate balance is disturbed, either by a wife's usurping of the male role or by the husband's arbitrary tyranny or wilful isolation. The ideal marriage is perhaps incapable of realisation but must be continually striven for as a basis for the good life. This is the "bread and cheese" of love which nourishes mature and sophisticated men and women in marriage. Young love, therefore, with its narcissistic agonies and miniature problems pales into insignificance before such a proving ground of human experience.

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The two novels I now wish to discuss, Orley Farm and He Knew He Was Right, represent the range of mature love and difficulties of finding balance in marriage I have been speaking of so far in general terms. Orley Farm is predominantly a cheerful book charged with pathos and with much sensational material, while He Knew He Was Right provides a contrast in mood in a bleak study of a disastrous marriage. The former with its scenes of broad comedy and melodrama implies the health of home and family virtues, the value of frankness and trust and forgiveness; the latter reveals the tragic consequences of the failure to achieve balance and compromise, the misery caused by unrelenting pride, selfishness and the will to dominate. A critic for the National Review, defending the wholesome tone of English fiction in January, 1863, found Orley

Farm represented "the precise standard of English taste, sentiment, and conviction."²⁴ Trollope, the writer declared, was now "almost a national institution."²⁵ So clearly here is a book which should indicate those qualities which are central to Trollope as a spokesman for the values his age cherished. In my view it shows his many virtues, but falls a little short of his greatest work because of its failure to harmonise the sensational elements of Lady Mason's crime with other parts of the novel. Sometimes thematic unity binds the sub-plots to the main trunk of the book and overcomes this tendency to over-write, but here the Lady Mason situation provides some intractably melodramatic materials.

One great merit of Orley Farm is, of course, the picture of English country life as the National Review had recognized. "No one" said the Saturday Review with uncharacteristic warmth "has ever drawn English families better."²⁶ Walpole, always drawn to the cheerful side of Trollope's work, said:

All rural England is here, it is the perfect and final symbol of everything that Trollope tried to secure in his art... It merges, like Barchester Towers and The Belton Estate, into the hedges and roads of the English countryside.²⁷

More than a rural idyll, however, Orley Farm is something of a half-way stage on the road to deeper psychological studies and the satirical

²⁴"Orley Farm", the National Review, XVI (Jan. 1863), p.23.

²⁵ibid.

²⁶The Saturday Review, XIV (11 Oct. 1862), p.444.

²⁷Walpole, pp. 126, 127.

force of The Way We Live Now. It has a much finer edge to it than Walpole suggested. Nevertheless, landscape and setting play a tremendously important part.

There are three spheres of action - London, Yorkshire and the Home Counties - the country around Orley Farm, which was modelled on "Julians Hill", Harrow, where Trollope lived as a boy. In London we are shown the haunts of the lawyers - Lincoln's Inn and Bedford Row; the Furnival household in Harley Street; the humbler neighbourhoods of Red Lion Square and Peckham, where Mary Snow is groomed to be the perfect wife for Felix Graham. At Groby Park, seven miles from Leeds, we meet Joseph Mason. In Leeds itself are the commercial travellers led by Moulder, whose home is at St. Helens. The third and most important location of the novel is the Orley Farm district which Trollope portrays in great detail. One is always conscious in this novel of contrast between restless movement and calm, between the rootlessness of the new urban centres and the order of the countryside. Thus by means of the scattered locations of the novel Trollope is able to mount an attack on commercial values, the cash nexus opposed to the humane spirit of the vanishing rural tradition.

Trollope was disturbed by the grossness of the mercantile mind which he saw at work in the political and social as well as the commercial spheres, but in his usual spirit of fair-mindedness and commonsense he does not mount a full-scale attack on the modern

world. He takes a middle position, alive to the needs for change and development to which his intellect is amenable, and aware of the dangers of entrenched conservatism to which his heart is constantly softened. Mean-spirited acquisitiveness and sordid speculation are condemned in the novel, but Sir Peregrine's seigneurial rigidity is viewed ironically. To miss this compromise is to lose some of the charm of the book. It is well to remember also that although the intellectual ferment of the time resulted in such studies as Unto This Last the early years of the 1860s were a time of cohesion and confidence. It is interesting to see how Orley Farm reflects the overall calm enlivened by the new spirit of enquiry which is puncturing orthodoxies in various fields. The great international congress of lawyers at Birmingham bent on establishing a fairer judiciary is one example, the discussion on scientific farming techniques another.

Orley Farm, then, represents the unity of feeling and purpose within the country as well as the growing points of radicalism and innovation - and, very noticeably, the adverse effects of what we grumble about today, the pace of modern life. This is expressed in the amount of travelling in the novel. The commercials shuttle between the northern cities and the metropolis. Lucius Mason investigates guano at Liverpool. The lawyers converge on Birmingham. Amid all this bustle life goes on quietly at The

Cleeve which takes on a symbolic role as the guardian of a worthy code of life, a whole system of values offering defence against the flux and materialism outside. Sir Peregrine's home, like that of Sir Thomas Bertram in Mansfield Park, "has not been a gay house"²⁸ but it has spoken for the duties and deficiencies of life, and his existence has ^{been} dedicated to "setting his house in order."²⁹ The Cleeve is an oasis of formality and pattern in "this hurrying and competitive age"³⁰ where men are more and more imbued with greedy ambitions like Samuel Dockwrath, who had become "master of that beautiful result of British perseverance, a balance at his banker's."³¹ In contrast to the shiny barbarism of modern life "everything was old, venerable, and picturesque"³² at The Cleeve and its environment draws from Trollope one of his rare descriptions of romantic nature.

The home of Joseph Mason at Groby Park, on the other hand, is not described at all, for he is essentially the rootless new man of the age, competitive, ruthless, and unprincipled. It is his wife, naturally, who responds favourably towards the shoddy metallic furniture Kantwise has for sale. Joseph Mason occupies Groby Park but has no contact with its land or regard for human ties and involvements.

²⁸ Orley Farm, Ch. III, p.30.

²⁹ ibid.

³⁰ ibid., p.31.

³¹ ibid., Ch. I, p.11.

³² ibid., Ch. III, p.27.

In Noningsby, the home of the Staveley family, we have a distinctive quality which is worth noticing. The house is new from cellar to ceiling with "all the newest appliances for comfort"³³ a place of sanctuary in good, modern design. Here is order and harmony in tune with positive agencies for improving man's life. The Judge looks to the future not to the past in which Sir Peregrine with his over-scrupulousness is trapped. The Judge is a Christian without cant or narrowness; he is warm-hearted and cheerful without loss of dignity; he is generous towards the feelings of the young and particularly understanding when Madeline falls in love with Felix Graham. As a cell of good living Noningsby offers far more positive qualities than does The Cleeve. Christmas at Noningsby (Chapter XXII) represents these qualities at their best in contrast with the chilliness of Sir Peregrine's mansion or the hilarious discomforts of Groby Park. Noningsby, Trollope is careful to point out, "lacked that something in appearance rather than in fact; [my italics] which age alone can give to the residence of a gentleman in the country."³⁴ Trollope is far more of a practical realist than the National Review critic perceived when he suggested that in Orley Farm the novelist looked back to "the golden age with which the present iron epoch

³³ibid., Ch. XXII, p.215.

³⁴ibid.

is contrasted."³⁵ There is tenderness for Sir Peregrine and Lord Alston but they are nonetheless dinosaurs incapable of facing up to the responsibilities of modern life. It is from Mrs. Orme, not Sir Peregrine, that Lady Mason derives the strength she needs to survive the court ordeal.

If Orley Farm appears to exude nostalgia, it is because of the élan with which the author assails the Victorian version of the affluent society through his satire on commercial ventures. Advertising helps the merchant batten on public gullibility and snobbery, encouraging greed and restlessness which spills over into private life. As Mrs. Furnival bitterly reflects:

"The world is becoming a great deal too fond of what you call excitement and success. Of course it is a good thing for a man to make money by his profession, and a very hard thing when he can't do it," added Mrs. Furnival, thinking of the olden days. "But if success in life means rampaging about, and never knowing what it is to sit quiet over his own fireside, I for one would as soon manage to do without it."³⁶

In the divided Furnival household it is little wonder that their daughter, Sophia, should have become a mercenary young lady. Mercantile foxiness seems to be the prevailing spirit on all sides. The honourable firm of Slow and Bideawile, Mr. Furnival well knows, will not operate as successfully as Matthew Round, the scrupulous but ruthless advocate. But the shabbiness of the commercial spirit

³⁵ Nat. Rev., XVI (Jan. 1863), p 39.

³⁶ Orley Farm, Ch. XI, p.106.

is most clearly shown in Kantwell's folding metal furniture which Mrs. Mason secures at a cut-price to give to the curate. Another set finds its way into Mrs. Dockwrath's sitting room, supplanting a "nice ... set of mahoganys".³⁷ As she wrathfully exclaims "They're got up for cheater; - that's what they're got up for."³⁸ In connection with the law, however, commercial practice is treated more subtly. Deceptions and advertisement are shown to be as much part of legal practice as they are of selling the wares of Hubbles and Grease. It is a familiar hobby-horse of Trollope's that a barrister is not interested in truth so much as a verdict in his client's favour, and riding it with a vengeance in this novel Trollope constantly draws parallels between the lawyer's expediency and the salesman's strategies. Moulder puts the parallel when he tells John Kenneby, a key witness at Lady Mason's trial, that the lawyers will force him to say exactly what they want:

"My duty is to sell, and I sell; - and it's their duty to get a verdict."

"But the truth, Moulder ---!" said Kenneby.

"Gammon!" said Moulder.³⁹

³⁷ibid., Ch. XLII, p.15.

³⁸ibid.

³⁹ibid., Ch. LXI, p.213.

One can also see that bargaining is extensively used throughout the novel. Furnival makes a fifty pound gift to his clerk, Crabwitz, to secure his loyalty as well as information about Dockwrath, who in turn offers cash to Bridget Bolster to make certain of her evidence.⁴⁰ When Moulder discusses the trial he offers a bet as the ultimate test of a man's belief in his opinion. Barter in human relationships is indeed the origin of Lady Mason's misery for she had married a man she did not love, having been brought up to believe that money and rank were all important.

Lady Mason's crime of forgery and lying draws to herself, and sums up, the greed and falsehood of many people. The law, represented by Furnival, Chaffanbrass and Aram, becomes a party to the fraud; Furnival is even prepared to buy off the opposition for one thousand pounds. The irony is deepened in that Furnival's probity is further undermined by the doubtful nature of his relationship with Lady Mason.

On balance, however, Lady Mason's story stands apart from the commercial satire, although to ^{Trollope's} his own age the melodramatic situation was what mattered. Modern readers may well find the passionate utterances of Lady Mason, Sir Peregrine, and Mrs. Orme less interesting than the social comment; but the unfortunate woman's confession to Sir Peregrine is well done. Lady Mason alone

⁴⁰ As R.M. Adams noted (*N.C.F.*, VIII, p.33) the trade theme is echoed by a conversation at Noningsby about the commercialisation of Christmas (Ch. XXII) and by the children's game of "Commerce" (Ch. XXVII). I should emphasise the stress on barter and sale which is the antithesis of the Christian spirit of fellowship and giving.

in an icy bedroom after her confession is the prose equivalent of the genre painting and expresses vividly her spiritual torment. Lady Mason is well drawn and we feel particularly for her since her son, Lucius, for whom she sinned, is shown to be priggish and self-centred.

Trollope thought well of his plot, but said he had erred in divulging too early that Lady Mason had forged the codicil to her husband's will. We can hardly take this point seriously. Very little is lost for there is still the outcome of the trial to satisfy the needs of suspense. More than this, the admission concentrates the effect where Trollope really wants it - on the guilt and anxiety felt by Lady Mason. Further tension is generated in the level of the conflict now facing Sir Peregrine who is caught between the claims of love and honour; Furnival's situation, too, takes on intriguing possibilities once we know that Lady Mason is guilty. The novel gains from the confession, and this shows Trollope's first-rate instinct as a novelist. Certainly Lady Mason's effectiveness as a character improves from this point. In the court scene she is the cynosure of all eyes; another genre painting suggests itself:

She was perfect mistress of herself, and as she looked round the court, not with defiant gaze, but with eyes half raised, and a look of modest but yet conscious intelligence, those around her hardly dared to think that she could be guilty.⁴¹

⁴¹ibid., Ch. LXIV, p.248.

Knowing for certainty as we do the fact of Lady Mason's guilt we share her agony while Furnival makes his summing up. Similarly, the pathos of her son, Lucius, utterly ignorant of her guilt, is greatly intensified. But perhaps even more important is the impetus Lady Mason's confession early in the novel gives to the rôles of Sir Peregrine and his daughter-in-law. By her share in the guilty secret Mrs. Orme shows true loyalty and Sir Peregrine has to confront his own moral dilemma. Hitherto he has been shielded by a rigid code of honour, but he grows in understanding and tolerance as to the true significance of Lady Mason's act of repentance - a deed of the purest love and respect for him. This leads him gradually, with the added guidance of Mrs. Orme, to a charity and compassion which he had previously lacked. Making Lady Mason confess so early gave Trollope the means of making her a noble heroine and educating Sir Peregrine in love.

The greatest achievement of Orley Farm remains the panorama of society, or what the Spectator termed "the host of living men and women who scatter themselves in the loose grouping of real life about the diverging paths of the story."⁴² First we have the sets of lovers, so well differentiated, who provide relief from the gloom of Lady Mason's guilt. In themselves the love affairs are

⁴²The Spectator, XXXIII (11 Oct. 1862), p.1137.

rather dull, but the characters are well drawn, principally Sophia Furnival, a blend of her father's discretion and her mother's vulgarity.

But if the stories of young love are a trifle weak, the comedy in the novel makes up for them, approaching at times a Dickensian verve. Consider the scene in which Mrs. Mason entertains at Groby Park, forced into a situation where she must provide hospitality, but driven by her compulsive meanness to make what savings she can on the dinner or her gifts. Even the prose style echoes Dickens:

"And now we'll go up stairs, if you please," said Mrs. Mason, with that gracious smile for which she was so famous.⁴³

The extravagance in the portrait is entirely in the Dickens vein (much as he criticised Dickens for creating characters around a peculiarity of nature and making them walk on stilts) as in the scene where Mrs. Mason's mania for economy drives her to subtract three chairs from the set of damaged furniture before the curate arrives.

Orley Farm does not concern itself with marriage directly, but it presents us with many attitudes to mature relationships, notably through the Ormes and Lady Mason. The health and vitality of the Staveleys may be contrasted with the aridity, in their

⁴³Orley Farm, Ch. XXIII, p.234.

different ways, of the Furnivals and the Masons of Groby Park. In terms of adult relationships the emphasis is on trust, forgiveness, honesty, and lack of self-interest - qualities which are fundamental to happiness in marriage and the well-being of society as a whole.

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They who do not understand that a man may be brought to hope that which of all things is the most grievous to him, have not observed with sufficient closeness the perversity of the human mind.⁴⁴

We are so used to hearing of Trollope's ability to mirror the surfaces of ordinary life that we can overlook the occasions when he penetrates more deeply into human behaviour. He is particularly good at analysing failure of will and states of melancholy leading to nervous breakdown and madness. Failures of several kinds can be found in the novels, but here I am concerned with a monomaniac, who succumbed to failure in marriage. My subject is Louis Trevelyan, the central figure in one of Trollope's best novels, He Knew He Was Right.

This is in many ways a crucial novel in Trollope's career. It shares with Phineas Finn the distinction of having secured his highest payment from a publisher (it is also one of his longest

⁴⁴He Knew He Was Right, Ch. XXXVIII, p.364.

books), and it announces an era of sharper social awareness than had gone before. It is his first full-scale study of the misfit and a potent comment on the imbalance made possible by views on marriage which obviously Trollope found disturbing. The book is surprisingly hostile to comforting illusions about social norms and the securities of wedlock and family life promised in the novels discussed in my last chapter. He Knew He Was Right is a domestic tragedy in which a love match with all the benefits of wealth, leisure and social privilege is exposed as a ruinous power struggle. Moreover, the social background which Trollope usually makes the repository of desirable norms of conduct is presented as petty, shallow and corrupting. The hero is intellectual as well as handsome, an unusual combination for Trollope, but repugnant in his obduracy; the heroine is in many ways the antithesis of such principles of modesty and charity hitherto presented to us as ideals of femininity. Trollope seems bent on facing us with uncompromising realities and it may be a shock to some readers to find the apostle of the commonplace joys of domestic life wearing the cloak of the subversive. The couple who married for love were disastrously incompatible. Aunt Stanbury is a vindictive shrew; Priscilla Stanbury a naturally miserable female with a morbid aversion to men; Colonel Osborne a philandering hypocrite.

It is scarcely surprising that the public failed to respond to the novel with much warmth. The critics avoided the central figure

and cast around for familiar Trollope characters and scenes of peaceful bourgeois life. Only the Spectator tried to face up to the unsavoury implications of the novel, taking the interesting viewpoint that the evil genius of the book was the wife, Emily Trevelyan.⁴⁵ The general absence of comment on Trevelyan himself in other journals seems to confirm Sadleir's verdict that "to contemporary criticism he was a monster."⁴⁶ Both the title and Trollope's comments in his Autobiography should show us where the focus is meant to lie. Trevelyan knew he was wrong, but perversity drove him to his destruction. Trollope's judgement on the book was severe, possibly because of his awareness of critical reaction: "I look upon the story as being nearly altogether bad."⁴⁷

As I said above we are faced with a strangely disoriented society in this novel, one in which guides to honesty, fidelity, marital and family ties, seem to be undermined or unequal to stresses within the individual. Instead of being able to draw from the reservoir of shared moral reserves supplied by society, men and women find themselves in a landscape as arid as the Siena hills to which Louis Trevelyan flees in desperation. Or else they are blown about by forces within themselves which they cannot fathom or control - even Mr. Gibson:

⁴⁵The Spectator, XLIII (12 June, 1869), pp. 706-8.

⁴⁶Sadleir, Commentary, p.393.

⁴⁷Autobiography, Ch. XVII, p.276.

"I fancy sometimes that some mysterious agency interferes with the affairs of a man and drives him on, - and on, - and on, almost, - till he doesn't know where it drives him."⁴⁸

This expresses at the farcical level what in fact occurs in the Trevelyan's tragedy. But the society in which such events occur is shown to be thoroughly unreliable, and equally irrational. Surface appearances are taken as valid judgements of the situation time and time again. The social chorus at Exeter led by Aunt Stanbury and Priscilla leap to conclusions as to Emily's conduct, judging without charity or knowledge. The weakness of society's rôle, moreover, is summed up by Lady Millborough's ineffectual contribution as marriage ^{counsellor} ~~counsellor~~ which consists of urging upon the couple the necessity of a trip to Naples. Thus the society to which the victims of the tragedy are constantly referring back for guidance is shown to be shallow and unreliable. Indeed its salons and clubs feed on gossip of the kind the Trevelyan situation provides, and reference to its demands are almost fatal to the Spalding-Glascock match.⁴⁹ Reference to the social code seems destructive of true humanity; the Outhouses resent the demands made on them when from largely social obligations they take in Emily and Nora to their humble East End home. The conduct of the Stanbury ladies is little better; questions of social propriety weigh heavily with Mrs. Stanbury when Emily's situation grows worse. Only the independent

⁴⁸ He Knew He Was Right, Ch. LXV, p.621.

⁴⁹ ibid., Ch. LXXX is entitled "Will they despise him?"

Priscilla has the courage to say "I defy the evil tongues of all the world to hurt me."⁵⁰ The Trevelyans are, in fact, surrounded by bigotry and shallowness, so that their constant references to the shame and disgrace they suffer in the eyes of the world takes on an extra dimension of irony. Social opinion is of very little moral utility, but is blindly worshipped by the Trevelyans and increases their suffering. Louis sees himself as "one who had been made unfit for society by no fault of his own."⁵¹ Emily also suffers from the fear of social stigma, exclaiming at one point, "... he has disgraced me before all men by his own words."⁵² In his madness Louis repudiates a society which seems to be based on vanity, hypocrisy, vulgarity and deception, calling England "the most damnable, puritanical, God-forgotten, and stupid country on the face of the globe."⁵³ His paean to liberty is ironic since he has been the prisoner of a rigid and unhealthy social code, of which the antithesis is Hugh Stanbury's and, to some extent, Brooke Burgess's "bohemianism", which puts a premium on individual integrity and a certain indifference to conventional society. Nora

⁵⁰ ibid., Ch. XVI, p.151.

⁵¹ ibid., Ch. XXVI, p.246.

⁵² ibid., Ch. LX, p.564.

⁵³ ibid., Ch. XCII, p.871.

Rowley, indeed, resists the stultifying code embodied in her family's values to marry her lover against all worldly considerations. Thus Trollope's projection of an insensitive society adds to the texture of irony throughout the book.

The central theme, however, is the struggle for power in relationships to which the sub-plots contribute as, for example, Aunt Stanbury's bullying of her niece. Misuse of parental power is seen in Sir Marmaduke Rowley's attitude towards his daughter and Hugh Stanbury, and like Aunt Stanbury he is made to acknowledge that relationships can exist only in terms of concessions and mutual respect.

It is tempting to see He Knew He Was Right as a study of jealousy, particularly as Trollope emphasises the connection with Shakespeare by having his tormented hero muttering "The pity of it Iago!"⁵⁴ Bozzle, as Iago, is yet another unpleasant facet of the social scene, for this environment proves destructive of trust in human relationships and breeds Bozzles. Lack of trust in his wife is noticeable in Trevelyan from the first. But jealousy is not the disease itself, merely a symptom. Trevelyan is incurably weak; the very antithesis of Trollope's "manly" husband, and the struggle issues from his need to bolster his ego by dominating his wife.

⁵⁴ibid., Ch. XLV, p.422.

Trollope sets the situation adroitly. We are shown "a man of whom all people said all good things,"⁵⁵ but who, from the first acts the tyrant. At an early stage in the story we learn that "he could not bear to have to own himself to have been wrong."⁵⁶ But Emily too, is proud and likes to have her own way. So much so that the Spectator was revolted by her and made this comment:

We are both astonished and displeased at the sympathy which the novelist asks for on behalf of Mrs. Trevelyan as the tale draws to its close, since he has drawn throughout a cold, self-willed, high-tempered woman, who, though doubtless entirely free from any imputation of the kind for which she suffers, never shows, till the end of the tale, a particle of sympathy for her husband's sufferings, does do a vast deal wilfully to provoke him, and is portrayed, even during his last illness, as without a shadow of self-reproach for the obstinate heartlessness of her own conduct in the beginning of the troubles, and solely occupied with the absorbing desire to extract her own complete exculpation from her husband's dying lips.⁵⁷

But was Trollope wrong in showing his heroine in this way? Nora, it must be remembered, had her stubborn side also, and defied her father to marry Hugh Stanbury. As she tells Lady Milborough "I am going to marry for liberty,"⁵⁸ A little later she says that

⁵⁵ ibid., Ch. I, p.3.

⁵⁶ ibid., Ch. I, p.8.

⁵⁷ The Spectator, XLII, p.708.

⁵⁸ ibid., Ch. XCV, p.897.

young men do not generally marry "to get a slave."⁵⁹ This is a norm which Louis Trevelyan violates. Once Louis has precipitated the action by implying that Emily is on the verge of a flirtation the damage has been done. The jealousy he can then justify covers his own insecurity as a man; the imputation against her honour prevents her absolutely from climbing down. Emily is indeed silly, indiscreet and insensitive at this stage, a confidante of Hugh Stanbury, but Louis is infinitely more culpable. Trollope wants us to see his unpleasant lack of manliness early on, and even has him speculate on Emily's behaviour being a consequence of her upbringing in the tropics.⁶⁰ Crippled by his weakness of character, Trevelyan constantly demands that Emily shall bend the knee:

But he was jealous of authority, fearful of slights, self-conscious, afraid of the world, and utterly ignorant of the nature of a woman's mind.⁶¹

His jealousy and suspicion are not even at first the delusions of a disordered mind; they are the manifestations of his frustrated urge to power and a deliberate course of self-destructive and vindictive actions. He sets the apparatus of Bozzle's investigation in motion without believing in Emily's guilt and adds to his burden of shame and humiliation. Stealing his child is, as Cockshut suggests, a means of providing himself with a bargaining

⁵⁹ ibid., p.898.

⁶⁰ ibid., Ch. V, pp. 41-2.

⁶¹ ibid., Ch. XXVII, pp. 257-8. See also Ch. LXII, p.592.

counter in the battle with his wife, but is a poignant reminder also of his pathetic need for a dependant^e love which is possible only from child to parent. Yet as the child begins to pine Trevelyan realises that even this fulfilment is denied him, and he agrees to restore the boy to his mother. It is no accident that Trevelyan is shown reverting to a childlike condition, and as a child he returns to his wife in the closing rounds of his contest. His last bid for power relates to the matter of her infidelity which has been hinted at all along. The attempt at reconciliation at River's Cottage had shown that the single dominating idea in Trevelyan's mind had become the utterly gross one that she should confess to adultery. This is put in biblical phraseology: "Say that you have sinned; - and that you will sin no more."⁶² Afterwards Lady Rowley and her daughter discuss the situation in appalled fascination.⁶³ Trevelyan knew in his heart that she was not guilty, and that "he, he himself, had consummated the evil by his own folly."⁶⁴

⁶²ibid., Ch. LXVII, p.637.

⁶³ibid., pp. 639-640.

⁶⁴ibid., Ch. LXXXIV, p.787.

Yet when he returned to England he began again to torment Emily for her alleged infidelity, reaching her through innuendoes to Nora. It is Emily herself, in pursuit of honesty and truth, who has to confront the issue and triumph over lies and self-deception. And with masterly ambiguity Trollope gives her only half a triumph. The chapter title is "Acquitted" which indicates her absolution, but the circumstances of the confession are ambiguous. She asks the terrible question which no one throughout the whole course of events has put into words: "I have not been a harlot to you; - have I?" He answers evasively "What name is that?"⁶⁵ Then she urges him to kiss her hand as a sign of acknowledging his false suspicions. This he does not do. Returning to Nora she "told the tale of her tardy triumph."

"He declared to me at last that he trusted me," she said, - almost believing that real words had come from his lips to that effect. Then she fell into a flood of tears, and after a while she also slept.⁶⁶

It is an appropriate finale, since both husband and wife were at fault in failing to observe that mutual trust and respect and vital consciousness of each other's soul, postulated in the relationships of the Glascocks, Burgesses and Stanburys.

Henry James, who greatly admired this novel, spoke of its focus on "an accidental rupture between two stiff-necked and ungracious people"⁶⁷ reminding us that Emily too was guilty, in so

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, Ch. XCVIII, p. 927.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 928.

⁶⁷ James, *Portraits*, p. 129.

far as she lacked charity and compassion. However, it has to be remembered that Louis Trevelyan set out to degrade her by demanding what was tantamount to a confession of adultery without real cause. Despite his cruelty she returned to him when he was ill with a renewed love and sense of duty. She even begged his forgiveness and endured further insinuations until she was nearly at breaking point herself. Surely a wish to exonerate herself is permissible in the circumstances?

The remarkable element of this novel is the psychological truth of the conflict between the two characters. Scarcely a detail is missing in the presentation of each stage of the quarrel: the stilted conversation in front of a third party, the preposterous attitudinising with a confidant, the private rehearsal of each imagined insult and each vindictive reply, and the wilful pleasure from the steadily worsening situation. Indeed, each character seems to further the dispute with macabre enjoyment. As Emily agrees to the Colonel's visit to Nuncombe Putney, "She had a dim perception that she was standing on the edge of a precipice", and moreover, "she liked the excitement of the fear" too;⁶⁸ while Louis positively gloats over his misery. In him the study is directed to the breakdown of a mind under stress. His moods run the gamut of rage, self-pity, and wild bursts of humour, and in the Casalunga scenes Trollope is at his best,

⁶⁸He Knew He Was Right, Ch. XX, p.191.

integrating mood, character and scene. Here Trevelyan reaches out to his only friend, his child, with rocking horse and troops of bright red Garibaldian soldiers. The scene in which Stanbury calls on him at Casalunga is brilliantly managed with details suggesting Trevelyan's disintegration in the barren environment.⁶⁹ His paean to liberty in tones of ghastly hilarity is the supreme irony of a man broken under the rigidity of narrow moral absolutism and egotism.

My conclusions about Orley Farm and He Knew He Was Right, therefore, are that they show Trollope on his strongest ground as both the realistic and compassionate observer of significant areas of human relationships. Each in its own way makes statements about healthy adult attitudes to life within the domestic framework. The topic of married life and mature love engages him deeply and the result, I find, is fiction of a more interesting kind than that by which he is generally known. Such novels illustrate also his breadth of tolerance and human understanding. More than his charming stories of young love they represent Trollope's clear and honest portrayal of the complexities of close personal ties and social relationships.

⁶⁹ibid., Ch. XCII, p.867.

Chapter Five

LONELY HEARTS

A woman's life is not perfect or whole
till she has added herself to a husband.
Nor is a man's life perfect or whole till
he has added to himself a wife;¹

Love, culminating in marriage and family life has been shown in my two preceding chapters to be the greatest concern of Trollope's fiction. Many people, however, are denied that wholeness and fulfilment and they too have a place in many novels which I now propose to consider.

We have seen that both within marriage and outside it people sometimes isolate themselves through defects in their natures such as pride, jealousy, greed or ambition. Victims of intractable qualities within themselves, like Louis Trevelyan, almost seem to welcome the descent from melancholia into silence which their rejection of human ties brings about. Loneliness of this psychological kind will be touched on in the discussion of Lucinda Roanoke on pp. 226-7, a doomed solitary because of sexual forces she did not understand.

¹Miss Mackenzie (1950), Ch. XI, p.136.

This psychological aspect of isolation has been noted by critics in a number of Trollope's most intriguing characters, particularly in Septimus Crawley, and therefore I propose to pursue the theme of solitude among the least exceptional of Trollope's characters - the lonely middle-aged man, the maiden aunt, and the young widow. Here among average human types and common experiences, as so often with Trollope, the common chords of the human condition are struck with understanding and poignancy. There are many pictures of solitary men and women in Trollope, his emphasis quite naturally falling upon age as an aspect of loneliness in his later books. The loneliness of Plantaganet Palliser after the death of Glencora is beautifully described in The Duke's Children, for example, and one can judge from Trollope's references to age and failing health in his letters how keenly he felt that aspect of growing old which cut him off from fellowship. My first chapter has emphasised, indeed, Trollope's cravings for worthy companionship after his youthful experience of being friendless and alone. That undistinguished foray he made into a species of scientific fiction, The Fixed Period, is interesting solely because of its fusion of weariness at the onset of old age, and a kind of masochistic contemplation of the ultimate solitude. But solitariness of this kind will not be my concern in this chapter, so much as the more entertaining form it takes in the presentation of the lonely middle-aged man or woman looking for a partner, or the plight

of the plain spinster whose condition is so much a public issue throughout the whole period of Trollope's writing life. Since this is so it is natural to find that his study of loneliness is largely centred on the single woman, accordingly she takes the major rôle in the following discussion. The Eustace Diamonds, discussed in the last part of the chapter, can hardly be said to present a typical young widow, although it does offer some useful illustrations of the solitary state through such figures as Miss Macaulty, Lucy Morris, Lucinda Roanoke. It has been chosen, however, for the comprehensiveness of its statement about the values Trollope considered vital to self-fulfilment in the personal, domestic sphere. It therefore provides a summary in effect of the points raised in all three chapters on individual morality and character. The Eustace Diamonds also is one of Trollope's most inventive and satirical novels in which his simple philosophy based on integrity, self-discipline and growth towards mature love, is expressed without intrusive moralising.

Trollope is fond, as we have seen, of the cliché about love as woman's whole existence. "The men hunt foxes; the women husbands,"² however, gives a slightly false impression, for the serious basis of Trollope's love stories is that both men and women

² Margaret Hewitt, "Anthony Trollope: Historian and Sociologist", The British Journal of Sociology, XIV, 3 (Sept. 1963), p.229.

need love, marriage and home-life and that without it they are impoverished, desiccated, and not fully alive. Let us consider first the single man. The gay bachelor is at bottom a pathetic fellow; if he is old, he is pernickety in his habits and dress; if he is young, he is self-centred, indolent, and often dissipated. Seldom is he more than a figure of fun like Dot Blake or the idiotic Lord Popplecourt, the Duke of Omnium's candidate for his daughter's hand in The Duke's Children:

His ideas of marriage had as yet gone no farther than a conviction that girls generally were things which would be pressed on him, and against which he must arm himself with some shield.³

The bachelor's life is passed in gambling, riding to hounds, and making up the numbers at house-parties. His rôle is mostly utilitarian, to provide a confidant^e or foil to the hero (Arthur Herriot in The Eustace Diamonds or Isadore Hamel in Ayala's Angel are examples) and to offer slightly cynical jokes against matrimony. It is a point worth noting, however, that in later novels the gay bachelor is developed more fully with emphasis on his moral failings or general inability to act from any fixed base of duty, principle or honour. One thinks of the interesting ambiguities offered in the character of Jack de Baron in Is He Popenjoy?, or of Dick Ross in Kept in the Dark, even more of Frank Houston in Ayala's Angel. Whereas the caddishness of a man like Adolphus Crosbie was easily

³The Duke's Children (1963), Ch. XXXV, p.335.

explained and could be dealt with by a well-timed punch^{on} the nose, there is much more intricate analysis required to fathom the crimes of Fred Neville^C in An Eye For An Eye. This particular gay bachelor is much perplexed by obligations of rank which draw him to Sophia Mellerby and the strong physical attractions of an Irish girl, Kate O'Hara. I find the stress on moral insecurity and inability to control events in single characters of the later books clear evidence of the breakdown of stabilitiesⁱⁿ belief and social mores which Trollope illustrated in his later fiction. Fred Neville, at least, has some of the hallmarks of the modern alienated hero, driven by the glands and entirely without moral certainty:

"there was an unconquerable feeling on his own part that he was altogether unfitted for the kind of life that was expected of him."⁴

Trollope puts an end to his difficulties by having Kate's mother push him from the clifftop to avenge her daughter's honour. Cousin Henry, though not concerned with a gay bachelor so much as a weak-spirited lover, affords another instance of man losing control of events, having no internal guides for his conduct.⁵

One also notices a change of emphasis in Trollope's presentation of older bachelors. Again their rôles are kept to the minimum

⁴An Eye For An Eye (1879), II, Ch. VIII, p.142.

⁵Compare Cecilia Western in Kept in the Dark who also seems unable to control or alter events.

and they are used to forward the plot rather than to say anything particularly searching about the condition of single life. Frequently they fulfil the place of benefactor or the reverse, or they can be the mouthpiece of particular crotchets. Captain Cuttwater in The Three Clerks advances Alaric's career and is useful as a voice against competitive examination. Sometimes Trollope uses the older bachelor as a Scrooge figure cantankerously obstructive to the fortunes of the hero, as George Bertram in The Bertrams. A more interesting variation, however, is the gay old stager who appears in several novels. Sir Lionel Bertram is one, a selfish sponger who pursues two ladies in the hope that he will secure the fortune of one of them. Colonel Osborne in He Knew He Was Right is of the same stamp but has more wickedness about him for he intentionally adds to the discord of the Trevelyan household by flirting with Emily. If there is significance in such characters it arises only indirectly, by what the reader infers of the egotism and emptiness of the middle-aged man's existence outside marriage. Maurice Maule, paying court to Madame Max Goesler in Phineas Redux is more comic than pathetic, while Colonel Marrable in The Vicar of Bullhampton suggests a pantomime wicked uncle with his padded coat and tinted beard. From the cameos of earlier stories, however, Trollope turns to more deeply realised characterisations of the lonely older man. In Ralph the Heir which heralds that fine ten year period of creativity from 1870 the central figure is Sir Thomas Underwood, a widower.

Trollope makes an intriguing figure of him with his guilt about neglecting his children and not fulfilling himself either in his political career or as a writer. He is generous and sweet-natured on the whole, but he is slothful and irresolute. And there is one passage in the book which comes nearest to expressing the condition of loneliness which one would have thought might have fired Trollope's inspiration much more than it did. It occurs towards the end of the story in a chapter entitled "Music has Charms".⁶ Sir Thomas reflects upon his various failures and his largely wasted life, and yet as he accuses himself bitterly and makes resolutions for the future he falls back into his usual condition of inertia. The passage is too long for quotation here but it does express very clearly the price some people have to pay for the solitude which comes upon them, perhaps through no fault of their own and perhaps through their peculiarities of temperament, when they are denied the solace of marriage and home.

But pictures of the solitary man outside marriage are rarely as detailed as this. Sir Peregrine Orme's situation is sketched in with some pathos, it is true, but on the whole Trollope obviously saw the difficulties of such a subject for fiction and avoided it. This being so it is odd that his last completed novel should grapple with the idea of a lonely old bachelor's love for a young girl. In

⁶Ralph the Heir, III, Ch. XIII.

point of fact An Old Man's Love is not the poignant study of the solitary, so much as a low-powered comedy involving a devoted but domineering housekeeper, Mrs. Baggett, and a triangular love plot concerning William Whittlestaff, the old man (who is only fifty), his ward, Mary Laurie and a rather limp young gold prospector from South Africa, John Gordon, her childhood sweetheart. Sadleir has suggested that Trollope was possibly reliving in fiction something of his own feelings about Kate Field.⁷ At all events the romance is uppermost, and there is disappointingly little in the development of Whittlestaff. The stiffness and pomposity in his manner is meant to hide a certain shyness, but is slightly overdone and we do not feel with him. The ending is novelettish with his saintly renunciation of his claim to Mary's hand, and one is irritatingly reminded of another self-sacrificing bachelor, Roger Carbury, in The Way We Live Now. Both make their noble gestures with somewhat florid farewells which embarrass the modern reader. Of course, An Old Man's Love was written only six months before Trollope's death. One may conjecture that had he written it at the height of his powers it might have revealed more of the pathos of the solitary.

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⁷Sadleir, Commentary, p.220.

The solitary woman interests Trollope to a much greater extent and offers exciting fictional possibilities, as well as the opportunity to join the debate on an urgent social issue of his time. First I shall consider aspects of his older women, and then I shall examine his views on the young woman, both in non-fiction and fiction. Finally I wish to illustrate the ideas raised in this appraisal of single life through the outrageous career of Lady Eustace.

The older woman, reconciled to spinsterhood, frequently appears in Trollope's novels as an eccentric maiden aunt, who acts in the nick of time, like Miss Tallowax in Is He Popenjoy? to guarantee or restore the fortunes of either the hero or heroine. Usually she is somewhat caricatured with an identifiable curiosity of behaviour, speech or appearance. Her values are rigidly conservative, but this does not necessarily mean that she is narrow-minded. Miss Marrable, the aunt of Mary Lowther in The Vicar of Bullhampton, "thought a good deal about blood"⁸. She admired the robust eighteenth century novelists, and loathed Dickens as a writer who "had manufactured a kind of life that never had existed, and never could exist."⁹ Likewise, Aunt Stanbury in He Knew He Was

⁸ (1963)
The Vicar of Bullhampton, Ch. IX, p.60.

⁹ ibid., p.62.

Right looked to the past; "All change was to her hateful and unnecessary."¹⁰ An amusing catalogue of her Tory prejudices is given in Chapter VII, indicating Trollope's own affection for certain vigorous elements of eighteenth century style. Such characters as Jemima Stanbury and Miss Marrable, doubtless influenced by the author's memory of several relatives and friends such as Fanny Bent, described by Sadleir as "an old friend of Frances Trollope and of her sons",¹¹ were from the wealthy middle-class and could be used for fairy godmother rôles, as well as for asserting the code of chivalric conduct. At a more patrician level this is seen in the admirable picture of Lady Rosina de Courcy whose emphasis on cork-soled shoes as a basis of comfortable living so appeals to Plantaganet Palliser. "She was natural, and she wanted nothing from him"¹² and she maintained the best qualities of the de Courcy pride.

Another kind of spinster occurs frequently, one of slightly lower rank. Miss Todd is perhaps the most fully developed of the type, an outspoken, vigorously active maiden lady who has managed to make a success of single life by establishing herself in Little-bath society.¹³ Miss Todd is an important character because she

¹⁰He Knew He Was Right, Ch. VII, p.66.

¹¹Sadleir, Commentary, p.393. The relationship might have been closer. Bradford Booth points out a Mary Bent was Frances Trollope's first cousin. See footnote to Letters, p.53.

¹²(1961)
The Prime Minister, Ch. XXVII, p.309.

¹³Sadleir points out that Miss Todd may have been modelled on Francis Power Cobbe, the prominent humanitarian and anti-vivisectionist, Commentary, p.386.

vindicates the older spinster as a person in her own right. Miss Mackenzie at the start of the novel has been branded "a silent, stupid old maid"¹⁴ and one of the pleasing aspects of Miss Mackenzie is the manner in which she grows in self-respect and confidence. The interaction of the three women in the story to which Miss Baker contributes her own gentility makes a sympathetic case for the woman denied so much because she is unmarried. Miss Todd's roughness and worldly wisdom is a commendable form of facing up to a very lonely situation, and her impropriety is far worthier than the "feminine rakishness" of a hypocritical kind encouraged by the Reverend Stumfold. As Miss Todd tells Miss Baker:

"Tell me why are cards wicked? Drinking, and stealing, and lying, and back biting, and naughty love-making - but especially back biting - back biting - back biting - those are the things that the Bible says are wicked. I shall go on playing cards, my dear, till Mr. Stumfold can send me chapter and verse forbidding it!"¹⁵

In his problem of how to sustain interest in his heroine, however, Trollope created a love plot with marriage as her reward. Nevertheless something of the pathos of the lonely woman's situation emerges from time to time. Having smarted under the label of old maid, Margaret has grown accustomed to an existence "sad, sombre,

¹⁴ Miss Mackenzie, Ch. 1, p.9.

¹⁵ ibid., Ch. IX, p.119.

and, we may almost say, silent"¹⁶ it is understandable that she should be tempted to marry even Maguire with his squint. Hearing this news Miss Todd comments on spinsterhood:

"We single women have to be solitary sometimes - and sometimes sad... Have you never heard there are some animals, that, when they're sick, crawl into holes, and don't ever show themselves among the other animals? Though it is only the animals that do it, there's a pride in that which I like. What's the good of complaining if one's down in the mouth? When one gets old and heavy and stupid, one can't go about as one did when one was young; and other people won't care to come to you as they did then."¹⁷

This puts in a poignant form the burden of single life and it shows Trollope's sympathy which proceeds from the conviction that without marriage, a woman, particularly, is only half alive. If she has means she can move in society, or, like Miss Sarah Jack of Spanish Town, Jamaica, she can feel herself living by proxy by means of match-making. Otherwise she can fill up her time by good works. Mrs. Prime, the widow, in Rachel Ray believing that cheerfulness was a sin found her solace in the Baslehurst Dorcas society, and was much displeased with her sister, Rachel, for wanting to enjoy life.

Is He Popenjoy?, an underrated novel, touches on numerous issues concerning the solitary female with an intensity which

¹⁶ ibid., Ch. II, p.25.

¹⁷ ibid., Ch. XIV, p.175. We are constantly reminded of the distinction Trollope makes between older and younger single women. For Miss Mackenzie at thirty-five, single life is unmitigated disaster. But for the "old maid", recognized as such, Trollope looks on the bright side of the case.

reflects society's greater concern with this problem in the late sixties and seventies. Two female characters in it present interesting facets of the unmarried woman's predicament. Hetta Houghton, like Miss Todd, has come to terms with herself: "She has lots of money, and ~~she~~ lives all alone, ... She goes everywhere, and is up to everything," says her sister-in-law, Adelaide Houghton.¹⁸ Augusta Mildmay, on the other hand, represents the battalions of desperate spinsters engaged in one campaign after another to secure a husband. More than this, however, Guss looks for an ideal arrangement whereby she can be in love and also add to her fortune. Adding interest to her character in this way Trollope is able to show the farcical side of her attachment to Jack de Baron, who is adept at avoiding the matrimonial trap. Like Arabella Trefoil in The American Senator Guss has to work terribly hard to win her battle, and what Is He Popenjoy? so brilliantly does is to show that success on Augusta's terms, or on Adelaide Houghton's, is not worth having. There are few better pictures in Trollope's work of a hollow, jaded society in which bored wives indulge in flirtations and gossip, while single women either scheme to secure husbands or turn against the male sex altogether. The unmarried sisters of Lord George Germain, led by Lady Sarah, who "was never idle and never wanted to be amused"¹⁹ sublimate their instincts in

¹⁸ Is He Popenjoy?, Ch. XII, p.110.

¹⁹ ibid., Ch. III, p.24.

making petticoats for the poor, an activity which Trollope ridicules since it is engaged in for ~~for~~piety's sake with little relevance to the actual human situation.

The emphasis Trollope gives in his stories to the designing female shows how much depended on marriage, and many instances can be cited of his feeling for this unfortunate situation. Georgiana Longestaffe contemplates the failure of her matrimonial prospects in the closing chapters of The Way We Live Now with the utmost horror exclaiming to her mother:

"What is to become of me? Is it not enough to drive me mad to be going about here by myself, without any prospect of anything?"²⁰

And having lost the opportunity of marrying Mr. Brehgert, Georgiana takes the law into her own hands and elopes with the curate, Mr. Batherbolt. Spinsterhood is so dreaded that a woman would be prepared to pursue a potential husband around the world; Trollope even writes a story to this effect - The Journey to Panama. He makes the conventional jokes about such a predicament, but is keenly aware of its tragic side and this is abundantly clear from the spinsters Arabella Trefoil of The American Senator and Lady Mabel Grex in The Duke's Children. Arabella is of a similar type to Guss Mildmay, but much more fully developed as a character. She schemes for an

²⁰The Way We Live Now (1962), Ch. XCV, p.424.

advantageous match with Lord Rufford and is suitably punished by having to settle for Mounser Green, Ambassador to Patagonia. Her success as a character comes from her immense courage in laying siege to Lord Rufford, and the achievement of the novel lies more in her part than in the social issues raised in Senator Gotobed's views which have usually been the main concern of critics. The most memorable scenes are of Arabella's impressive ride on a spirited mount (Ch. XXII), her cleverly managed rendezvous with Lord Rufford in the shrubbery (Ch. XXXVIII) and her letter-writing (Ch. XLIV). Trollope is always at his best in letters and he makes Arabella's masterpieces of flirtatiousness, flattery, assumed naiveté and wistful earnestness. Her aggressiveness towards her mother covers a deep anxiety at each stage of the campaign which imposes strain because she lacks the financial resources to mix with aristocratic society. As she bitterly complains to her mother:

"I've been at it till I'm nearly broken down. I must settle somewhere; - or else die; - or else run away. I can't stand this any longer, and I won't. Talk of work, - men's work! What man ever has to work as I do?"²¹

Trollope makes critical comments about her, but he feels sympathy and compels our admiration. For example, notice in Chapter XXXIX, the night before a hunt during which she hopes to secure Lord Rufford's interest, Arabella leans from her bedroom window almost praying that

²¹The American Senator, Ch. XIII, p.85.

there will not be a frost. At frequent intervals we are reminded of the mental strain Arabella undergoes, the attention she must give to every nuance of behaviour. As Trollope puts it drily at one point:

She had taken great trouble with her face, so that she was able to burst out into tears.²²

And very naturally near the end of the struggle she comes near to mental collapse/in a scene of great intensity with her mother entitled "We shall kill each other."

I have used Arabella Trefoil as an indication of the lengths a girl may be driven to in order to secure a match, for Trollope is fully aware not only of the economic hardship of the single woman but of her psychological deprivation. The slight tale, An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids has at least one interesting feature in that it shows how people such as Miss Dawkins, hovering on the fringes of any company, batten on the available male if they can, lose their feminine qualities and become acidulated, strident, cynical. In some cases they become advocates of female rights. This is where Trollope reveals the prejudices of his age, for while he admires the courage of independent women like Miss Todd and pities those like Miss Macnulty who are forced to become companions out of economic need he cannot abide those who show

²²ibid., Ch. L, p.344.

their resentment at their lot by turning into workers for female emancipation.²³ His position is made clear at the beginning

of Chapter XI in Miss Mackenzie:

I believe that a desire to get married is the natural state of a woman at the age of - say from twenty-five to thirty-five, and I think also that it is good for the world in general that it should be so. I am now speaking, not of the female population at large, but of women whose position in the world does not subject them to the necessity of earning their bread by the labour of their hands. There is, I know, a feeling abroad among women that this desire is one of which it is expedient that they should become ashamed; that it will be well for them to alter their natures in this respect, and learn to take delight in the single state. Many of the most worthy women of the day are now teaching this doctrine, and are intent on showing by precept and practice that an unmarried woman may have as sure a hold on the world, and a position within it as ascertained, as as may an unmarried man.²⁴

Trollope's contempt for the feminist movement arises from the way in which it appears to divert women from their fullest self-realisation in marriage and strikes at the sacred bonds of the home and family life. The successful marriage, as I pointed out in my previous chapter, worked on a system of balance and compromise made possible by each partner's contribution of the proper capacities of the sex. Calling on women to march, secure the vote,

²³See North America, (1862), I, Ch. XVIII, for evidence of Trollope's keen sympathy for those forced to seek employment as governesses, but he insisted that this issue should be kept separate from the rights-for-women agitation. I make a further comment on p. 210 of this chapter.

²⁴Miss Mackenzie, Ch. XI, p. 136.

and compete with men in jobs, upset this balance. We have only to consider how important hearth and home became as the century wore on to imagine how sinister the feminist movement looked to the majority of the nation. It was not masculine pride alone which made members of Parliament howl with derision when J.S. Mill made his regular plea for female suffrage, but the fear of undermining the reassuring symbol of order and security in a world where stabilities were becoming increasingly harder to find. The importance of this symbol has been stressed by many scholars on these lines:

Victorian middle-class homes were, ... domestic sanctuaries, sacred castles or fortified temples, protective bulwarks against an increasingly hostile world of ruthless commerce, poverty and industrial blight, child and sweatshop labour, prostitution and crime. But in the home adults might immerse themselves in family life and salvage some humanity.²⁵

Trollope shows he agreed with the spirit of much of Mill's programme. He loathed the tyranny of male domination in so far as it degraded a wife; he disliked the kind of male supremacy which made a wife into a pretty toy. He would even side with Mill to the extent that the single woman denied the heaven of marriage should have more opportunities for education and a career. But for such a girl as Kate Field, for example, career prospects offered a poor substitute

²⁵ Mark Spilka, "Turning the Freudian Screw: How not to do it," Literature and Psychology, XIII, 4 (Fall, 1963), p.108.

in Trollope's view for her fulfilment as a wife and mother.

He grew tetchy about her lecturing interests on one occasion:

you do not, I think, catch the objections which are made; - that oratory is connected deeply with forensic, parliamentary, and pulpit pursuits for which women are unfitted because they are wanted elsewhere; - because in such pursuits a man is taken from his home, and because she is wanted at home.²⁶

The question of a wife's mental gratification and its effect upon her rôle as a mother and companion did not occur to him apparently, but he is honest enough in his fiction to portray the terrible limitations upon the woman in marriage, a situation in his view which was unfortunate but had to be endured. As he put it to an American correspondent, Adrian Joline, in 1879:

You cannot, by Act of Congress or Parliament make the woman's arm as strong as the man's or deprive her of her position as the bearer of children. We may trouble ourselves much by debating a question which superior power has settled for us, but we cannot alter the law... The necessity of the supremacy of man is as certain to me as the eternity of the soul.²⁷

Supremacy, but not subjugation. As my last chapter indicated Trollope was much more liberal in his attitude towards equality in marriage than his statements outside his fiction would suggest.

When it was a matter of the movement in favour of female suffrage, equality of opportunity in jobs and further education,

²⁶ Letters, 641, p. 363.

²⁷ ibid., 740, pp. 417-8.

however, he became decidedly reactionary. Consider, for example, his stand on women's education. His lecture on the Higher Education of Women, probably printed in 1868 and delivered in several cities is tepid stuff. For the first half of it he flatters his audience and tiptoes round the subject, finally venturing on the suggestion that women's education has made remarkable progress in two hundred years. Its chief fault at present may be that it stops too soon, a condition which is aggravated by woman's nature which lacks the "persistent energy by which he [a man] does perform, and has^{been}/intended to perform, the work of the world."²⁸ This leads him to suggest that the feminist movement is the activity of a certain class of females who "grudge the other sex the superior privileges of manhood."²⁹ Nevertheless Trollope admits that he admires the woman who protests that her lot is more abject than the man's, but insists that she is flying in the face of nature.

Humanity has been at work for the last thousand years and more to relieve women from work, in order to put the matter roughly - that man might earn the bread and woman guard and distribute it; that man might provide the necessities of life, and woman turn such provision to the best account. And that lesson comes direct from nature, - or, in other words, from the wisdom of an all-wise and all-good Creator. It is to be seen everywhere - in all the attributes, organs, capabilities, and gifts of the two sexes.³⁰

²⁸"The Higher Education of Women", Four Lectures, ed. Parrish, p.73.

²⁹ibid.

³⁰ibid., pp. 73-4.

The rest of Trollope's lecture attacks the idea of co-education or the same syllabus for boys and girls, insists that further education for women is in no way to be connected with women's rights which he discards in any case, and warns his audience against reading too many novels. Giving an imaginary portrait of the "emancipated darling" of the family in the free, undisciplined atmosphere of the modern home, he shows her succumbing to novels from Mudie, abandoning her German dictionary, then at last becoming "too languid for walking" even.³¹ His picture of what is possible for the young lady is composed of study in foreign languages, developing critical abilities (presumably to safeguard ^{her} ~~them~~ from the Mudie novels), instrumental accomplishment, painting, study of birds and insects, and social work. His final appeal is to a spirit of high resolution, hard work and conscientious attention to the housework.³²

Trollope is seldom seen at his best in the serious essay and his remarks on women in North America are even more questionable than those in his address outlined above. Chapter XVIII of this intriguing and often amusing travel book is devoted to The Rights of Women and is therefore relevant to this discussion. But as a piece

³¹ ibid., p.84.

³² An odd little essay, purporting to be by "an old maid" occurs in St. Paul's Magazine, I (February, 1868) which may act as a post-script to this discussion. The writer, who has an uncanny resemblance to Trollope, embarks on a series of hints to young ladies on the

of argument it is full of nonsequitur, begging the question, false analogy and loaded evidence. The central thesis is that "the best right a woman has is the right to a husband"³³. Employment is very well for those who cannot secure a husband, but he is firmly against those who would both widen job opportunities and carry on a campaign encouraging girls not to marry. Here is a typical example of Trollope's muddled thinking on the issue, after he has declared that action on behalf of oppressed groups such as the needlewomen or governesses is different from the matter of careers for women. The feminist advocate, he suggests:

is doing his best to create that position for women, from the possible misfortunes of which the friend of the needlewomen is struggling to relieve them. The one is endeavouring to throw work from off the shoulders of men on to the shoulders of women, and the other is striving to lessen the burden which women are already bearing.³⁴

Obviously pleased with this line of reasoning, Trollope maintains that society must not so far forget its chivalry as to allow women to drive London cabs, that women must not lose their femininity by competing with men, and (with proper chivalry of the male) that the time has not yet come when men are too weak to want to seek relief by putting their burdens on women's shoulders. He is critical

subject of Matrimony, warning them not to disguise their ignorance but to ask intelligent questions of the man they sit next to at dinner. Warning them against playing the "jeune ingenue with gushing emotions and impulsive affections," the old maid insists "Your proper study is to make yourself the best possible wife for your best possible husband, by educating your soul and mind and body to the best of your abilities." (p.735)

³³ North America, I, p.408.

³⁴ ibid., p.399.

of the feminists themselves for apparently "hankering after increased influence, a desire for that prominence of position³⁵ which men attain by loud voices and brazen foreheads" and this is clear enough evidence of how he stands on the matter of political rights, although he refuses to make a firm statement on this particular issue:

I will only say that the mutual good relations between men and women, which are so indispensable to our happiness, require that men and women should not take to voting at the same time and on the same result.³⁶

The views expressed in these two documents readily explain the harsh treatment of female rights advocates in the novels, and also the ambivalent attitude to strong-minded females in so many of the novels. To begin with the feminists, there is no question of fairness in presentation. The Americans especially with their aggressive independence (Trollope was much incensed by female rudeness on the New York trams) are particularly harshly presented. Wallachia Petrie in He Knew He Was Right and Olivia Q. Fleabody in Is He Popenjoy? are grotesques. So is Baroness Bannmann in the same novel. There was a peculiar incisiveness about the American character which both fascinated and appalled Trollope. The feminists are either mannish malcontents or dotty eccentrics

³⁵ibid., p.403.

³⁶ibid., p.407.

like Aunt Ju. Trollope's last fling at the breed in Kept in the Dark results in Francesca Altifiorla who is not only a she-dragon but an apostate. Born "in poor circumstances, but with an exalted opinion as to her own blood"³⁷ Francesca congratulates Cecilia Holt on not falling into "the common quagmire of marriage",³⁸ but when Cecilia falls in love with Mr. Western warns her of a future devoted to "the mending of his stockings and the feeding of his babies."³⁹ Marriage, according to Francesca means being "a man's toy and then his slave"⁴⁰. But having met Sir Francis Geraldine she reflects upon "the chill of her present life, of its want of interest, of its insipid loneliness",⁴¹ and abandons the cause of female rights altogether, confident that in marriage she will know "how to be the master."⁴² Sir Francis, of course, eludes her, while Cecilia exercises her "mastery" by winning back her husband with the submissiveness of true love, rejoicing secretly in her own innocence and virtue. Thus Trollope asserts the rightful balance of temperament and nature in the workable marriage.

From such evidence of Trollope's prejudices we can better understand his ambivalence towards the strong-minded females of several novels - the Junos who do not succeed in the marriage lottery or in their rebellion against man's world. Even Madame Max Goesler who asserts the joys of independence in Phineas Finn

³⁷Kept in the Dark, I, Ch. 1, p.3.

³⁸ibid., Ch. III, p.55.

³⁹ibid., Ch. V, p.96.

⁴⁰ibid., p.98.

⁴¹ibid., II, Ch. XV, p.55.

eventually marries, but throughout she has been more feminine and therefore more at peace with herself than other characters in the novel. Phineas Finn is indeed much occupied with the nature and rôle of women, and reflects the current controversy.⁴³ Not only has Lady Laura committed the crime of marrying without love, but she is the victim of that kind of masculine psychology which betrays the new, discontented and ambitious woman:

she would lean forward when sitting, as a man does, and would use her arms in talking, and would put her hand over her face, and pass her fingers through her hair, - after the fashion of men rather than of women;⁴⁴

Touches of this kind give a very clear view of this intellectual, slightly neurotic woman, and of Trollope's prejudices. Violet Effingham was going too far in her resentment at male domination:

"A man should try to be something," said Phineas.
"And a woman must be content to be nothing, -
unless Mr. Mill can pull us through!"⁴⁵

But fortunately for her peace of mind Violet is wooed and finally won by the masterful Oswald. Similarly intractable elements in

⁴²ibid., p.57.

⁴³ Although J.S. Mill's essay, The Subjection of Women, was not published until 1869 it was written in 1861 and the issues it raised were much aired during the decade. The Annual Register for 1867 says of Mill's motion to give women the vote the debate "assumed a somewhat jocular character" (Ch. III, p.72). The Woman's National Suffrage Society was formed in that year. The subject of women and work was also hotly debated in the decade. Josephine E. Butler edited essays entitled Woman's Work and Woman's Culture in 1869. Legal disabilities were particularly bad for women having been alleviated only slightly by the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. The Married Woman's Property Act did not become law until 1882.

⁴⁴Phineas Finn, Ch. IV, p.40.

⁴⁵ibid., Ch. LIX, p.243.

the personality may be detected in other Junos. Alice Vavasor in Can You Forgive Her? is a perfect example of the girl who suffers from "an over-fed craving for independence"⁴⁶ and from the start of the novel we discover that:

her mind had become filled with some undefined idea of the importance to her of her own life.⁴⁷

In an earlier novel, The Bertrams, Caroline Waddington shows traits of the new woman and makes several speeches about female independence and the injustice of male supremacy. She was certainly not the type who would "ever grow into a piece of domestic furniture."⁴⁸

But all these women miss the point. By being headstrong and trying to compete in male spheres they injure their natures and grow embittered and unfulfilled. Trollope respects their spirit but deplores their wilfulness, insisting that they do exercise power in marriage provided that they follow the natural impulses of the sex, developing their intuitive sympathy and gentleness without becoming clinging vines or pretty ornaments. Young Mrs. Orme, although a widow, can be seen as a representative of the norm, a woman who learned to love without egotism and at the same time with no diminution of her powers as a woman. The emphasis on marriage

⁴⁷ibid., Ch. XI, p.134.

⁴⁸The Bertrams, I, Ch. IX, p.171.

and family life in Trollope's work is enormous, as I have said, and proceeds from a simple, fundamental belief in the basic human need for union. I find this well expressed in a passage from The Vicar of Bullhampton in which Mary Lowther marvels at her love for Walter Marrable:

Shetold herself that she had found the second half that was needed to make herself one whole; that she had become round and entire in joining herself to him;⁴⁹

His hostility towards female rights clearly stems from his pre-occupation with the idea that the movement undermines the sacred bond of marriage.⁵⁰ In this area he is at his most unreasonable and dogmatic. However, consideration of this element in his presentation of single life together with others examined in this chapter adds a dimension to our understanding of his central literary concerns; the beginnings of love and its growth in marriage and the home.

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The Eustace Diamonds can hardly be said to present the plight of the solitary as it has been discussed so far in this chapter,

⁴⁹The Vicar of Bullhampton, Ch. XXXVII, p.261.

⁵⁰Trollope invariably batters on the labour aspects of female rights agitation, assuming that it will encourage women not to marry. See The Vicar of Bullhampton, Ch. XXXVII, pp. 259-260 for comment on this and for a rebuttal of Mrs. Linton's article, "The Girl of the Period" in the Saturday Review, XXV, 14 March, 1868.

and yet by the force of its negative examples it indicates how much an individual suffers from being unable to find that personal salvation in marriage and the home which Trollope constantly upholds. But also, The Eustace Diamonds, again by negative example, makes a commentary on the kind of society which can evolve when men and women are in competition, when they sacrifice their honour and scruples for ignoble ends, and when they succumb to greed, lying, and deportment. It is this latter function of the book with which I am mainly concerned - the drift towards vulgarity and meanness and amorality, symbolised by the lure of the diamond necklace. This novel reminds us that Trollope could be a stringent, disenchanted, almost bitter about society, which is perhaps why it is popular today. It belongs in spirit with another social satire, The Way We Live Now, but operates on an intimate, personal domestic level with more economy and concentration. The Way We Live Now ranges a good deal wider, operating on several levels to give a panoramic view of decay in high society, business, press and government. Here the emphasis is on individual corruption; there the interest is the nation's moral bankruptcy.

The effect is one of concentration and unity through the personality of Lizzie Greystock, who becomes Lady Eustace through a calculated, love-less match. There are comic scenes to lighten the atmosphere and Lizzie herself is an amusingly volatile creature, but the mood of the novel is decidedly sombre in the manner of The

Bertrams or He Knew He Was Right. There is no set of characters elsewhere in Trollope with the repellent qualities of Lizzie's friends; they remind us of the group cozened by Volpone. The blackness of tone in the novel extends over most of the characters; even Frank Greystock is shaded so darkly that Trollope feels it necessary to explain and defend his behaviour. Consequently The Eustace Diamonds makes a statement very directly and bleakly about an acquisitive society in which men and women buy and sell themselves or resort to shabby stratagems for personal gain.

Material wealth rules the society. The diamond necklace, valued at ten thousand pounds, means power and security as well as social esteem to Lizzie and many who think like her. To John Eustace, an honourable man, and to Mr. Camperdown, the family lawyer, it represents the continuity of a noble house and the values of feudal dignity which are no longer esteemed. It is a matter of principle and honour to assert the family ownership of the necklace. But monetary values rather than spiritual ones operate in the new society. Hence the diamond necklace is the focus of much pretence, vainglory and cupidity. Moreover, under the strain of commercial attitudes and the decline of chivalry, even the traditional aristocracy has compromised without realising it. The salons buzz with gossip about Lady Eustace and her necklace, acting with irresponsible delight at each new development. Lady Glencora's interest is chiefly that of caprice and a characteristic touch of

vulgarity in her nature, but it scarcely does her credit. The Duke of Omnium, now practically senile after his life of indulgence, cackles over the mystery. Finally, the three months old scandal is dismissed by the conversation of Lady Glen and Madame Goesler as a diversion which kept the old Duke amused.

Social apathy and irresponsibility are in the background of the novel. In the foreground are the people who act with varying degrees of rapacity occasioned by their materialistic outlook. The Fawms, who are described as "poor rich people",⁵¹ hover between a family code of honour and integrity and their economic necessities. It is the desperate scramble for money portrayed throughout the novel which makes it such an onslaught on what Trollope despises in declining values. But there are two attitudes shown towards money-worship, one of plain revulsion for the hypocrites and opportunists, and one of understanding for such as the Fawms or Miss Macnulty.

Lord Fawn thought a great deal about money. Being a poor man, filling a place fit only for rich men, he had been driven to think of money, and had become self-denying and parsimonious, - perhaps we may say hungry and close-fisted. Such a condition of character is the natural consequence of such a position.⁵²

The trouble is that such struggling can undermine the character. Mrs. Greystock's attitude is thoroughly distorted by her refusal

⁵¹The Eustace Diamonds, Ch. IX, p.78.

⁵²ibid., p.74.

to see any further than material considerations when she contemplates her son's possible marriage to Lady Eustace, and she becomes positively inhuman towards Lucy Morris. Even Frank's conduct is tinged with materialism, and he joins to some extent the band of ambiguous creatures circling around Lizzie:

"The fact is, I live in that detestable no-man's land, between respectability and insolvency, which has none of the pleasure of either. I am fair game for every creditor, as I am supposed to pay my way, - and yet I never can pay my way."⁵³

Indeed it can be argued that with his hero Trollope goes so far with the more reprehensible features of his character that Frank almost forfeits our sympathy. Trollope's usual practice is to show his heroes with a certain alloy of weakness or a dash of devilry about them, but Frank certainly has a more pronounced black streak than heroes of Harry Clavering's stamp. To begin with he is "not over scrupulous in the outward things of the world,"⁵⁴ and he believes that "happiness was to be achieved by success".⁵⁵ When he proposes to Lucy he admits that he has been tempted to marry for money and position, "to help myself on in the world by means of a wife,"⁵⁶ and he shows himself more than willing to succumb to

⁵³ibid., Ch. LXII, p.561.

⁵⁴ibid., Ch. IV, p.32.

⁵⁵ibid.

⁵⁶ibid., Ch. XII, p.111.

the physical attractions of his sophisticated cousin. Things seem to be getting out of hand when Trollope indulges in a lengthy explanation of his hero's conduct and human nature in general:

But there are human beings who, though of necessity single in body, are dual in character; - in whose breasts not only is evil always fighting against good, - but to whom evil is sometimes horribly, hideously evil, but is sometimes also not hideous at all.⁵⁷

Lady Eustace and Lucy, he explains, do not have this duality about them, "they were, each of them, a simple entity".⁵⁸ This statement requires clarification. Lizzie Eustace is in fact a far more complex character as I shall show. Lucy Morris, however, does illustrate a total purity which, as I pointed out in Chapter Three, mars Trollope's presentation of his young heroines in general. She is truth incarnate, an idealised virtue to which a hero is supposed to aspire, but one which does not accord with Trollope's views of actual human nature. To Frank she is supposed to be the embodiment of good nature, the touchstone of reality and truth, and it is a very dull reality as it is presented to us through Frank's thoughts in Chapter XIII. The long page of description in which Trollope asserts the worthiness of his heroine is finally undercut, and shown for the mawkishness it really is. Trollope himself does not believe it:

⁵⁷ibid., Ch. XVIII, p.162. See also Ch. XXXV, "Too Bad For Sympathy", in which he points out that Frank falls lamentably short of heroism, and Lizzie is abominable.

⁵⁸ibid.

He knew that his cousin Lizzie was a little liar, - that she was, as Lucy had said, a pretty animal that would turn and bite; - and yet he liked his cousin Lizzie. He did not want women to be perfect, & so he would say. But Lucy Morris, in his eyes, was perfect; and when he told her that she was ever the queen who reigned in those castles in the air which he built, - as others build them, - he told her no more than the truth.⁵⁹

Freighted with such a burden of perfection it is not surprising that Lucy, in her customary grey dress, is such a pallid character.

Lizzie, on the other hand, is extremely well drawn, but she is not the simple entity Trollope called her. The skill in her creation lies chiefly in the way Trollope shows her emptiness and fundamental misery. The wish to possess the diamonds, her dreams of a Corsair, her attempts to secure one lover after another, are pathetic attempts to find an identity for herself. Ironically, she embraces solitude among the rocks at Portray, although she is least able to bear being alone. Although she is the widow of Sir (Eustace) Florian she has no actual position; in society there is "still too much of the mushroom" about her.⁶⁰ Described several times as a cat, she is destined to walk alone among the stronger predators, male and female, with whom she is embroiled. "Clever, sharp and greedy"⁶¹ she may be, but she is never mistress of events. Instead she is forced into acts by the exigencies of the changing

⁵⁹ ibid., Ch. XIII, p.113.

⁶⁰ ibid., Ch. XXI, p.188.

⁶¹ ibid., Ch. II, p.15.

situation, and lacking a sense of her own identity or any moral centre she is constantly appealing to others - even poor Miss Macnulty - for advice or confirmation of her actions. Trollope makes her a creature of utter isolation and amorality, as hard, bright and cold as the gems she covets. She is not even a sentimentalist as Ashburnham is in The Good Soldier - one whose feelings drive her this way and that. She has no feelings other than those windy sensations on the seashore and Trollope draws her consistently as a woman whose tragedy is that she has no feelings at all. As one set of illusions is replaced by another Lizzie flounders in pathetic bewilderment. Trollope notes:

The reader, perhaps, by this time, has not a high opinion of Lady Eustace, and may believe that among other drawbacks on her character there is especially this, - that she was heartless. But that was by no means her own opinion of herself. She would have described herself, - and would have meant to do so with truth, - as being all heart.⁶²

The picture is a chilling one, a subtle delineation of the kind of person whose very absence of character often produces skilful actors and actresses. Lizzie's greatest accomplishment in fact is her acting ability, and we are constantly being reminded of the rôles she plays. She is "quick as a lizard in turning hither and thither, but knew almost nothing"⁶³ whereas Lucy is fully aware of her own nature.

⁶²ibid., Ch. XXVI, p.238.

⁶³ibid., Ch. X, p.89.

Even Lady Fawn is appalled at Lizzie's hypocrisy. Every one of her actions is studied and contributes to her destruction as a person. A tête à tête with her cousin is little more than a stage performance which Trollope sets down with fine irony:

She ran up to him and grasped his hand, and hung on his arm, and looked up into his face, and then burst into tears. But the tears were not violent tears. There were just three sobs, and two bright eyes full of water, and a lace handkerchief, - and then a smile. "Oh Frank," she said, "it does make one think so of old times!"⁶⁴

Presenting her as an actress in this way is sufficient to guarantee our interest in her, but Trollope manages to give a poignancy to the character by endowing her with just enough self-knowledge for her to perceive her own emptiness and shamming:

Lizzie Eustace was very false and bad and selfish, - and, we may say, very prosperous also; but in the midst of all she was thoroughly uncomfortable. She was never at ease. There was no green spot in her life with which she could be contented.⁶⁵

Thus she becomes a very human, pathetic creature, brought to life in remarkably moving terms in this novel. We see how such a woman with virtually nothing but her striking good looks to sustain her must compete with even more striking beauty in Lucinda Roanoke. We see her wistful regard for the confidence and integrity she perceives in Lady Glencora. We see how futile and inconsistent are her thoughts on life and love, the contradictions tumbling out one after

⁶⁴ibid., Ch. XIV, p.107.

⁶⁵ibid., Ch. XXI, p.189.

another.

She had a grand idea, - this selfish, hard-fisted little woman, ... of surrendering herself and all her possessions to a great passion... Now she desired to be so in love that she could surrender everything to her love.⁶⁶

But she fights to keep her jewels and her Corsair is the raffish Lord Bruce, who finds her at last "such a mass of deceit, that he was afraid of her."⁶⁷

Lizzie's literary aspirations, part of the truth-falsehood dichotomy throughout the novel, are particularly well done. Poetry is both a marketable commodity by which she can to some extent trade among sophisticated people and also a reflection of that romantic haze in which she envelops herself for want of true feeling. Even Miss Macnulty sees through this kind of falsity and sticks honestly by her attachment to romantic novels. Lizzie, who most of all needs people to fill the vacuum within herself, persists in regarding herself as a solitary, and so she takes her copy of Shelley down to the seashore. The whole of Chapter XXI is a masterly evocation of Lizzie's inconsistencies. Seeing herself as the pure spirit she is nonetheless dedicated to the plan of seducing her cousin. Her rocky perch turns out to be in full sunlight, so she is driven to the summer house where the seat is too narrow and the snails disturb her. Finally, the poetry taxes her mind too severely

⁶⁶ ibid., Ch. V, p.43.

⁶⁷ ibid., Ch. LXIII, p.575.

and she joins Miss Macnulty in reading novels. This pseudo-poetic side of Lizzie has its relevance also to the material desires of her nature. In other words the comfort she derives from the necklace is about as delusory as her concept of poetry and of love - merely a "castle in the air."⁶⁸ The fusion of these elements is stressed as the novel draws to its conclusion, for she decides that Lord Fawn has not a grain of poetry in him, "and poetry was what her very soul craved; - poetry, together with houses, champagne, jewels, and admiration."⁶⁹ Mr. Emilius wins her because he does have a kind of poetry about him, of a pseudo-Shelleyan kind which Lizzie can appreciate more than the real thing. It is noticeable that the volume she has to hand when Emilius calls is one of Shelley's and when he addresses her using words like "adamantine", "queen of my soul", and "empress" she is almost carried away. The satire is characteristically heavy-handed, but Trollope increases his effect by showing how Lizzie half-recognizes the hypocrisy of her suitor.

The other characters in the story are like Lizzie in that their behaviour is governed by self-interest, covetousness and dishonesty. They either live on their wits like Lord George or Emilius, or tyrannise like Lady Linlithgow, Mrs. Carbuncle or Sir

⁶⁸ ibid., Ch. V, p.45.

⁶⁹ ibid., Ch. LXVIII, p.610.

Griffin Tewett, who has the psychology of a sadist. Lucinda Roanoke, whose feelings are totally disregarded in the marriage market has to be considered, however, in rather different terms. At one level, of course, she represents an aspect of the general theme I have been discussing in that the mercenary values of the society compel her to marry without love, but this is insufficient to convey the psychological depth in her rôle. Her entry in the novel is totally unexplained and mysterious. No reason is given for her implacable hostility towards Sir Griffin, and gradually a character unfolds which no modern reader can mistake as a study in lesbianism. In appearance Lucinda has a heavy but striking beauty, and her horse-riding is done with masculine ferocity. Once the marriage has been agreed her melancholy increases and we learn from Mrs. Carbuncle that she has never been gay like other girls. "I have never known her once to be what you would call happy."⁷⁰ Again, without explanation, Lucinda is shown begging Lady Eustace to make Sir Griffin abandon the marriage:

"Tell him that I shall only make him miserable, and more despicable than he is; - that I shall never be a good wife to him. Tell him that I am thoroughly bad, and that he will repent it to the last day of his life."⁷¹

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, Ch. LXI, p. 547.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, Ch. LXVI, p. 598.

Later to her aunt she shows signs of acute mental distress and says "I don't think I could feel to any man as though I loved him."⁷² When the marriage is seen to be inevitable Lucinda in an almost catatonic state of fear says "You have destroyed me."⁷³ She refuses to budge from her room and is at last found to have suffered complete mental breakdown. Quite apart from the psychological implications of this part of the book, it makes a devastating comment on the material concerns which link Mrs. Carbuncle and Lady Eustace.

It is in this fashion, largely by negative example, that Trollope makes his statement on the values which should sustain the individual and lead to fruitful relationships within marriage and society. The positive statement of values through Lucy Morris is perhaps the least successful element, for it is no more than a simple dichotomy between Lucy's virtue and Lizzie's wickedness. Fortunately, however, it is Lizzie who holds the stage, portrayed with remarkable vitality and sureness of touch. Undoubtedly she is one of Trollope's most memorable heroines.

⁷²ibid., Ch. LXIX, p.627.

⁷³ibid., p.629.

Chapter Six

TROLLOPE AND IRELAND

And now I went ashore ... happy also
to know that I was once more in
Ireland.¹

- North America

Trollope's involvement with Ireland lasted all his life, and novels at the beginning, middle and end of his career indicate this manifestation of consistency and continuity of his work. But this topic also allows me to move from personal themes to more public concerns within a well-defined area, before embarking in my final chapter on more general interests of man in society.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the "chaos of criticism" surrounding Trollope is the unwarranted neglect of his Irish stories. Apart from several reviews in his lifetime and scattered comments in surveys of his work there is no adequate treatment of this area of Trollope's fiction.² One article in recent years paid tribute to Trollope's first two novels, but its very title - "Trollope's Prentice Work" - betrayed a hesitancy which is quite unnecessary.³ The Macdermots of Ballycloran in

¹North America, II, Ch. XVI, pp. 462-3.

²"Mr. Trollope's last Irish Novel", The Dublin Review, XIII (Oct. 1869), pp. 361-77; "The Novels of Mr. Anthony Trollope", The Dublin Review, XIX (Oct. 1872), pp. 393-430.

³R. Donovan, Modern Philology, LIII (Feb. 1956) did attempt to correct Sadleir's view, but concerned himself mainly with The Kellys.

particular shows that already by 1847 Trollope had arrived at a high level of competence which he seldom fell below, and a knowledge of human behaviour he consistently tapped for the rest of his life. Yet the Irish books are relatively unknown.

Consider the fortune of The Macdermots, published by T.C.Newby in 1847. As Trollope recalled the event:

If there was any notice taken of it by any critic of the day, I did not see it. I never asked any questions about it, or wrote a single letter on the subject to the publisher ... It is probable that he [Newby] did not sell fifty copies of the work; - but of what he did sell he gave me no account.⁴

Several reviewers did notice it in fact, and not unfavourably. With his second novel, The Kellys, in 1848, Trollope thought he had notched another failure, especially when Henry Colburn, his publisher, suggested he should abandon novel writing altogether. Heeding Colburn's advice perhaps, Trollope turned to other literary ventures between 1848 and 1852 - letters on the Irish famine for the Examiner, a historical romance called La Vendée (1850) and a play, The Noble Jilt. Next he tried his hand at a guide-book to Ireland, working hard at it during 1850 and 1851, returning to Ireland for material from his new base in the south of England. Success evaded him until The Warden, 1855, followed two years later

⁴Autobiography, Ch. IV, p.64. See Trollope, The Critical Heritage, ed. Donald Smalley (London, 1969), Appendix, pp. 546-552.

by Barchester Towers. Sadleir therefore concluded that Ireland produced the man while England produced the novelist. The Macdermots, Sadleir said, was "a false dawn."⁵

This is a long way from the truth. No study of Trollope can fail to take into account the Irish novels, all of which show characteristic Trollopian touches and two at least - The Kellys and Castle Richmond deal with themes and types of characters common to all his work. Equally important is the effect Ireland had on Trollope, fostering an element of romanticism and humour, strengthening his powers of imagination, and saving him from more prosaic qualities which might otherwise have dominated his fiction. We need only read stories such as The Conors of Castle Conor and the account in the Autobiography of his early years in Ireland to see how the exuberance and gaiety of the people attracted him. "It was altogether a very jolly life."⁶ Meeting all kinds of people in his job and leisure, and reading widely in Irish literature, Trollope also learned something of their magic and sadness and eloquence of expression, particularly the latter.⁷ Trollope savoured the natural grace of expression, and the savagery, superstition and ribaldry of the people and gave it authentic expression in his fiction.

⁵Sadleir, Commentary, p.151.

⁶Autobiography, Ch. IV, p.55.

⁷As an instance of this see Elisabeth Inglis-Jones, The Great Maria, A Portrait of Maria Edgeworth (London, 1959), in which she describes a gossoon sent on an errand, promising to "be off at the flight of night,". (p.28)

He also learned his lessons well from the works of Maria Edgeworth, William Carleton, Charles Lever and, no doubt, Thackeray's Irish Sketch-Book.

At the peak of alertness, as any newcomer to a country invariably is, Trollope hurried through the counties in the cars popularised by the remarkable Bianconi who became his friend.⁸ Here he developed the power of seeing which never left him. Escott tells us that a Dublin woman was reminded by Trollope's observation of Irish life of a customer in a shop examining materials for a new dress.⁹ Those who knew Ireland, said Escott, accounted The Macdermots "a true picture of the country, a correct insight into its people."¹⁰ The Dublin Review said of him: "His Irish sympathies are strangely deep, and true, and tender."¹¹ Such genuine fiction cannot come from immersion in Irish literature alone, but from close and sensitive response to people and scenes he loved. An important influence here would have been Sir William Gregory of Coole Park, where Trollope met Lever and other distinguished members of society. Sir William himself, elected Member of Parliament for Dublin soon after Anthony's arrival in Ireland,

⁸ See M.O'C. Bianconi and S.J. Watson, Bianconi, King of the Irish Roads (Dublin, 1962), p.91.

⁹ Escott, Trollope, p.52.

¹⁰ ibid., p.61.

¹¹ The Dublin Review, XIII, p.362.

was a man of culture and representative of that class of landowners whose example seemed to argue for the retention of the feudal landlord system. At least it helps to explain why the unfinished novel, The Landleaguers, is so reactionary and out of tune with modern views on tenant-landlord relationships.

The circumstances which gave rise to Trollope's first novel are too well known to bear repetition, but their romantic side may be juxtaposed with some practical possibilities. Stories of secret societies with strong political overtones were in vogue, as, of course, were novels of social, propagandist purpose.¹² The strongest influence, however, is The Collegians by Gerald Griffin, published in 1828. Writing to Henry Taylor in the summer of 1869, Mrs. Pollock recounted what Anthony had told her of his visit to Killarney during those early years in Ireland. By the lake Trollope had exclaimed that Hardress must have done his foul murder thereabouts, whereupon his guide, a priest, shuddered and said: "Hardress was my first cousin, and I stood on the steps of the scaffold when he was hung."¹³ The anecdote sounds odd enough

¹²Mrs. S.C.Hall's The Whiteboy appeared in Chapman and Hall's Monthly Series in 1845; William Carleton's Rody the Rover, or The Ribbonman, and Valentine M'Clutchy, the Irish Agent, also were published in 1845. Tales by the O'Hara Family, Part 1, by John and Michael Banim were reappearing in the Parlour Series, 1846. The Collegians came out in the Parlour Library in 1847. See Michael Sadleir, XIX Century Fiction, II, London, 1951.

¹³Correspondence of Henry Taylor, p.297.

to have been genuine, and does show how responsive Trollope was to The Collegians and its doom-laden atmosphere. Certainly a faint resemblance can be detected between Eily and Feemy, and there is an element of Hardress Cregan's weakness in Thady. But The Macdermots has its own flavour, as I shall show.

Among major novelists it is hard to find one whose first published novel has been so effectively put out of sight. The Macdermots made its second appearance in B48, when it was described as "A Historical Romance" in the hope of wider appeal. Sadleir's Bibliography lists a "New Edition" 1859/60 by Chapman and Hall which I have not seen. However, the British Museum copy dated 1861 is abridged from the original. It survived in John Lane's New Pocket Library, in 1906, but was never reprinted in England. Strange to say, not even Sadleir seems to have noticed the loss of some one hundred pages from the original story, reducing the book from thirty-six to thirty-three chapters.

The abstracted portions occur in the last volume to the considerable improvement of the novel as a whole. Trollope had not yet acquired the vivacity of imagination to keep his narrative alive for the duration of a long novel, nor had he the technical skill to avoid repeating himself. Even in its shortened state it drags unmercifully in its final stages. One of the missing chapters was apparently designed to lighten the narrative after the gruesome account of the assault on Hyacinth Keegan. Father John McGrath sets out by coach to Dublin with an assortment of comic passengers to

borrow money from his brother for Thady's defence. This gives Trollope the opportunity of indulging in some broad humour in the Lever idiom, but it is unoriginal to say the least; he invents a shrewish, red-nosed woman who takes furtive drinks from a bottle throughout the journey, very like the situation of a similar coach journey in Joseph Andrews. As the coach rattles past Edgeworthstown^{Town} Trollope remarks on "the residence of the authoress of whom Ireland may well be so proud," and at last we are in Dublin.¹⁴ Another interesting aspect of this sight-seeing tour is a reference to Maynooth, where Trollope displays much sympathy to the Roman Catholic cause. As he once wrote, he preferred the South of Ireland to the North, liking better "on the whole papistical to presbyterian tendencies."¹⁵ Of the education of the priests he said in one missing chapter of his novel:

It is alleged that the priests of the present day are dangerous men - enthusiasts - political fanatics and bigots; if it is so are these faults most likely to be found in an imperfectly, or in a highly educated character? if in the former, sure the more that is done for the priests of the next generation, the less likely are they to be imbued with the crimes which are now attributed to their predecessors.¹⁶

¹⁴The Macdermots of Ballycloran (1847), III, Ch. II, p.82. The first edition has been used only for evidence of deleted passages from the novel. All other quotations are from the New Pocket Library edition, 1906.

¹⁵Letters, 39, p.23.

¹⁶The Macdermots, III, Ch. II, p.85.

In the second deleted chapter he remarks on the "unshaken belief" of the Catholics, the "sincerity of trust which has ^{kept} Ireland so faithful to her church, through all the frightful means which have been taken to convert her."¹⁷ In Castle Richmond he took great pains to expose the bigotry of the Protestant point of view and to applaud the missionary work of the Catholic priesthood. Although popular opinion in England blamed a militant Catholic Church for inspiring conspiracy and lawlessness among the people, those who knew Ireland well tended to see the priests as attempting to maintain law and order and to discredit rebels and unlawful measures such as the withholding of rent advocated by the Land League. The considerable remainder of this second missing chapter covers in 37 pages the proposed line of defence worked out by the lawyer, O'Malley, and his views on the likely prosecution case. In other words, Trollope describes nearly all the material he goes on to present dramatically in the closing chapters. It appears that the author's fascination with the process of law and perhaps his pride in his knowledge of legal jargon gets the better of him in the third volume. O'Malley's defence, for example, extends over two chapters, some 5,000 words of almost uninterrupted monologue, concerning matters we are all aware of! It is a little late in the day when Trollope apologises: "It would be drawing this trial out to a weary length

¹⁷ibid., III, Ch. III, p.108.

to give the whole of his Keegan's evidence."¹⁸ The third chapter deleted resorts to the convention of what-happened-next. Brady was finally arrested for spying and informing and Keegan failed to secure Ballycloran, which was ^{so}do bedevilled by debts and legal squabbles that it fell into decay:

The property was bought by an opulent land-holder - member of one of the adjoining counties - but the title is not even made good, and therefore, though he receives the rents, and has paid the purchase money into court, that purchase money cannot be appropriated to the payment of the debts; but has been invested in the funds, and Keegan receives the interest.¹⁹

And so the empty house falls into ruin, an appropriate symbol of the muddle which was allowed to go on festering in the country until the torch of Fenianism, the Land League, and finally the Revolution, brought a new Ireland into existence.

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Trollope's Irish novels are grounded on significant events of history: agricultural distress and Ribbonism of the thirties (The Macdermots); O'Connell and the Repeal organization of the forties (The Kellys); the Famine of 1847-48 (Castle Richmond); the agrarian outrages of 1879-82 (The Landleaguers). Of the four The Macdermots manages best to integrate social themes with

¹⁸ ibid., (The New Pocket Library, 1906), Ch. XXXI, p.581.

¹⁹ ibid. (1847), III, Ch. XII, pp. 425-6.

the human interest of the tale. It is also superior to the others in the evocation of the country and its mixture of pathos and humour. Notice the first six or seven chapters of peasant comedy, not unlike that of old Thady's stories of Sir Condy Rackrent. And the tale of Denis McGoverly's courtship might have come straight from Carleton's Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry. The dialogue throughout is natural, racy, picturesque: "we'll hole hm till there ar'nt a bit left in him to hole."²⁰ Nor does Trollope miss a vein of poetry in the utterance of simple folk like Joe Reynolds, who comments after Ussher's death:

Ussher's black soul has gone its long journey
this night with more curses on it than there
are stones on these shingles.²¹

Authenticity comes, too, from the use of Irish words like "thrawneen", "skalpeen" and from dialect - "rape" for "reap", "divil", "dacently" and so on. Beneath the comedy there is always sadness, poignant reminders of the condition of the people, well rendered by imaginative detail such as the gate hanging off the post at Ballycloran, or the oddments of crockery in Father John McGrath's home. Constant references to food remind us that the people exist near the brink of starvation.

A melancholy tone is struck from Trollope's preliminary to the story - the author's discovery of Ballycloran:

²¹ ibid., Ch. XXII, p. 411.

²⁰ ibid., (1906), Ch. IV, p. 37

I crept out of the demi-door again, and down the ruined steps, and walked round the mansion; not only was there not a pane of glass in the whole, but the window frames were all gone; everything that wanted keeping was gone; everything that required care to preserve it had perished. Time had not touched it. Time had evidently not yet had leisure to do his work. He is sure, but slow. Ruin works fast enough unaided, where once he puts his foot.²²

There is a suggestion here of violence which is a vital quality of the story concerning the fall of the Macdermots. Amid the robust humour and farcical events from time to time passion and violence is continually bursting out true to the Irish temperament. When Keegan comes to bargain for his house old Larry screams at his son:

"Kick him out, Thady; kick him out, will ye? - Have ye none of the owld blood left round your heart, that you'll not kick him out of the house, for a pettifogging, schaming black-guard!"²³

Larry is, after all, the descendant of a Connaught prince. The true passion of the novel lies in scenes such as this, not in the romantic tale itself of Feemy's misplaced love, but in the authentic touches of Irish character and experience. There is one scene in which Keegan, the first of a line of rapacious lawyers in Trollope's fiction, has his leg cut off by the Ribbonmen. Trollope must have heard many accounts of such savagery, and he was able to weave them into his story with more conviction than he could manage for Feemy's

²²ibid., Ch. I, pp. 4-5.

²³ibid., Ch. X, p.166.

love affair. The character of Feemy is well drawn, however, and we get a distinct picture of a buxom colleen, inclined to slovenliness, but tender-hearted and pitiful under Ussher's indifference and her brother's harshness. Her decline in utter desolation at the end of the book is drawn with conviction. Notice that two familiar Trollopian concerns are involved here - the headstrong woman involved in an unsatisfactory love/affair, and the condition of isolation and mental collapse. Thady, of whom I have more to say later, is a convincing study of a weak, generous man caught in a primitive vendetta, and then broken by guilt and remorse like some Graham Greene hero. His accidental murder of Ussher and the presentation of his state of mind thereafter reminds one strongly of Eugene Aram or Paul Clifford, but my interpretation of the character will stress his/symbolic rôle in the context of the novel's social significance. One other character to be especially noted, however, is Pat Brady, the agent. On the personal level he is thoroughly credible, even to the ebullience of the Irishman exaggerating for the sheer pleasure of words:

"D--n Flannelly!" was Brady's easy solution of the family difficulties. "Let him take the house he built, and be d--d to him; and if we can't build a betther one for the masthur and Miss Feemy and you, without his help, may praties choke me!"²⁴

²⁴ ibid., Ch. III, p.21.

But Brady is also a type - the dangerous, vicious land agent who battered on the misfortunes of the people.

The conflict between Thady, Feemy and Ussher involving seduction, murder and madness need not concern us so much as the tragedy of Ireland itself conveyed by the total effect of the novel. A series of events concerning the Leitrim tenants comes before us, and while the passionate conflicts of the major characters are in the foreground we never lose sight of the people themselves. Lean, ragged men sprawl in Mrs. Mulready's shebeen, or stand like spectres in their cabin doorways. An atmosphere of tension is thus generated for a good two-thirds of the novel, heightened by moments of reckless gaiety over the poteen drinking and at a truly gaelic wedding. As I said earlier, there is constant reference to feasting and at Mary Brady's wedding the men eat and drink with the frenzy of people whose bellies are often empty. Father John speaks grimly of men who drink like animals, but has compassion for he knows their suffering. In Chapter XVII "Sport in the West" we have a parallel to the scene of peasant festivities. It begins with a reference to the poverty of Carrick-on-Shannon attributable to "circumstances and misfortune, and not to the idleness of the inhabitants", and it depicts satirically the grossness and horseplay of the gentry.²⁵

²⁵ibid., Ch. XVII, p.299.

Chapter XIX, "The Races" describes the luxury in which some people live with obviously ironical force.

The ladies began to unpack the treasures with which the wells of their cars had been loaded - cold hams - shoulders of mutton - pigeon pies - bottles of sherry- and dozens of porter soon made their appearance;²⁶

Thady eating scraps of bacon and dry bread on the mountainside in Chapter XXIII makes a grim contrast with this feasting.

From this description it will be apparent that Trollope manages with great skill to interconnect a personal, domestic tragedy with a public tragedy, the misery of a whole people.

From one point of view The Macdermots might be called a "condition of Ireland" novel for beyond the tight personal drama lies the drama of western Irish existence. One of Trollope's qualities, noticeable in Castle Richmond also, is the breadth of scene he covers. Here he ranges over the question of the absentee landlord, "Mohill", the evils of con-acre operated by McKeon, rack-renting practised by Jonas Brown and sons and the savagery of the Ribbonmen. That Trollope intended a general application of his story related to an individual tragedy is apparent from the opening when he was led to speculate on the "wrong, oppression, misery, and despair, to which someone had been subjected."²⁷ Thady's wrong is the people's wrong, expressed on the general scale

²⁶ibid., Ch. XIX, p.350.

²⁷ibid., Ch. I, pp. 5-6.

in the town of Mohill, which is a kind of Irish version of Lord Marney's rural town in Sybil. The owner is Lord Birmingham, an absentee, whose tenants live in mud hovels like neglected dung-heaps. Disraeli's tone is neutral, he sets the facts before us as from the details of a blue-book. Trollope attempts the withering irony of his mother and, I think, errs by over-playing his hand, as this extract shows. First he depicts a poor woman's cabin, the smoke rising from damp turf, the darkened interior, the mother and children in rags, and the miserable pallet made out of a few rotten boards. "Can that be the habitation of any of the human race?" he asks. Then he describes the absentee landlord:

Look at his name on all the lists of gifts for unfortunates of every description. Is he not the presiding genius of the company for relieving the Poles? a vice-presiding genius for relieving destitute authors, destitute actors, destitute clergymen's widows, destitute half-pay officers' widows? Is he not patron of the Mendicity Society, patron of the Lying-in, Small Pox, Lock, and Fever Hospitals? Is his name not down for large amounts in aid of funds of every description for lessening human wants and pangs? ... 'Tis true he lives in England, was rarely in his life in Ireland, never in Mohill. Could he be blamed for this? Could he live in two countries at once? ... Yet shall no one be blamed for the misery which belonged to him; for the squalid sources of the wealth with which Poles were fed, and literary paupers clothed? was no one answerable for the grim despair of that half-starved wretch, whom but now we saw, looking down so sadly on the young sufferers to whom he had given life and poverty? That can hardly be. And if we feel the difficulty which, among his numerous philanthropic works, Lord Birmingham must experience in attending to the state of his numerous dependents, it only makes us reflect more often, that from him to whom

much is given, much indeed will be required!²⁸

Here in a burst of Dickensian indignation is the most anti-establishment sentiment in the novel, perhaps in all of Trollope. If it is over-written and clumsy, it is nonetheless sincere and an improvement on the blatant propaganda to be found in some problem novels such as Kingsley's in parts of Alton Locke. It has the usual faults of the genre, the personal intrusion of a horrified sensibility, the facts assembled as though to make a case, the moral exordium. Dickens is usually far more successful in this field as he is able to dramatise the issues; as, for example, in Oliver Twist he illustrates Gamfield's nature perfectly by showing him tethering ~~his~~ horse, before he appears with the guardians to negotiate for a piece of human flesh.

At least Trollope's sympathies lie in the right direction. Even the vicious Joe Reynolds is seen in terms of the privations and consequences of his environment. Brady is a different matter, for on the general level of the tale he is used to illustrate what Trollope believed to be a factor in the administration which merited censure: the use of the informer. He felt strongly enough about this to devote nearly two pages to his opinion on spies being destructive to the national character:

Let the police use such open means as they have -
and, God knows, in Ireland they should be effective

²⁸ ibid., Ch. IX, pp. 128-9.

enough; but I cannot but think the system of secret informers - to which those in positions of inferior authority too often have recourse - has greatly increased crime in many districts of Ireland.²⁹

Such a viewpoint has its relevance today when police methods of obtaining evidence are much in the public eye.

The inter-action of public and personal themes is also sustained in the comedy with which the book relieves and also contributes to the drama, and this is most apparent in the wedding of Mary Brady and Denis McGoverly (Chapters XII and XIII). We are in the midst of a folk wedding with the music of the fiddle, laughter and dancing. Yet every so often we are reminded of the unpleasant reality of conspiracy and vengeance. Amidst the gaiety Denis has to warn Ussher of threats against his life. Ussher in genuine feeling for Thady (for even now Trollope would not present a bad character without some redeeming features) advises him to keep an eye on Brady. The noise grows louder, the company more drunk, and the tensions erupt in angry deeds and threats. Thady succumbs to Brady and his cronies and agrees to take the Ribbon oath, and outside in the darkness he has a drunken quarrel with Ussher. The stress on darkness at this point adds to the premonitory quality of the scene, for as Thady is drawn deeper into personal vendetta and public conspiracy, he sentences himself to hiding in the mountain of Aughacashel, a barren

²⁹ ibid., Ch. XI, p.174.

place studded with a few cabins of "a lawless, reckless set of people ... living without the common blessings or restraints of civilisation."³⁰

It is Chapter XXIII "Aughacashel" and Chapter XXIV "The Second Escape" which marks the climax of the book and the meeting of public and private themes. Thady in undeserved personal suffering, driven to a murder of honour, might be said to have become the emblem of the misery in which the ordinary folk exist. Our attention is caught by the strange beauty of Loch Sheen and the mountains, the moonlight and the sudden black shape of Corney Dolan's cabin on the edge of the bog. We arrive at the spot where Ussher, one symbol of the people's oppression, had arrested the brother of Joe Reynolds for being concerned in the sale of unlicensed spirits. Thady is driven further into the mountain of Aughacashel and here in some limbo he undergoes torments. "No road, or sign of a road," came within miles of this desolate region.³¹ At the limit of his endurance he stumbles into a cabin and now faces human life at its most animal level. Now the themes of public anguish and personal suffering coalesce. Thady appears to be surrounded by ghosts or demons. There is Dan Kennedy and his wife, a fearful silent man, Andy McEvoy and the girl, Meg, in whom all feelings are dead. The atmosphere is that of a tomb where time is suspended, a sense that

³⁰ ibid., Ch. XXII, p.408.

³¹ ibid.

is reinforced by the silence of McEvoy. Out of this purgatory Thady makes his second escape, returning to the cruel and hostile world where he will pay the penalty for his crime.

The pattern of the original version of The Macdermots is worth noticing as evidence of Trollope's technical ability even in his first novel. One can discern a rhythm of rising tension relaxed every so often by comic scenes and interludes. In the first volume we have Chapter V, "Father John", and Chapter XII, "The Wedding". In the second volume relief comes^s from Chapter XVII, "Sport in the West" and Chapter XIX "The Races". The tempo increases with the murder and flight (Chapters XX, XXI, XXII) and then slows for the vital Chapters XXIII and XXIV. The third volume has three comic chapters dealing with Father John's trip to Dublin, Chapter XXVI, "The Duel", and the epitaph allotting rewards and punishments. Trollope obviously put much thought into this framework, ending the first volume with wedding gaiety shot through with tragic portents, and Volume Two with a symbolic hell and purgation scene very different in tempo and mood from the first volume climax.

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In The Kellys and the O'Kellys we see Trollope as we are most used to him. He has exchanged the hovel and shebeen for the comforts of Handicap Lodge and the drawing room of Grey Abbey. The

novel has what Walpole called "creative zest"³² and is interesting because it introduces characters and themes of later work. To have lumped it with The Macdermots as Sadleir did - "a pamphlet in fictional guise"³³ - is unfair, for it is the least documentary of the Irish novels. Although its sub-title is "Landlords and Tenants, A Tale of Irish Life" the connection with actual events is slight. The O'Connell trial and the Repeal movement are briefly mentioned, and the peasants are like those of a bad musical comedy.

The Kellys nonetheless marks a stage in Trollope's progress, although it is in many ways a ~~lesser~~ novel than The Macdermots. Critics, however, were not unkind about it. The Dublin Review of October, 1872, thought that the family history of the Lynches surpassed those of his English stories as a study of human nature. The Athenaeum found it less painful than its predecessor and liked its "true 'emerald' humour".³⁴ The phrase suggests a quality of whimsy and staginess but according to Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper the book's great virtue was exactitude:

It is free from that outrageous exaggeration which is so common in sketches of Irish life and character. That the author knows well the subject on which he writes, is evident enough, even to those who have never been in Dublin or Connaught; and that he has the power of putting his readers in possession of his own knowledge and experience will be quite as clear to all those who go through these three volumes. ³⁵

³²Walpole, Trollope, p.37.

³³Sadleir, Commentary, p.145.

³⁴The Athenaeum, 1081 (15 July, 1848), p.701.

³⁵Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper (22 July, 1848), p.941. Trollope

In The Macdermots Trollope had concentrated on one action; now he tried a double harness with twin tales of high and middle life and the theme of chequered love and financial complications, which, together with the study of rank and occupation are staple ingredients of his novels. The aristocratic level of the plot involving Lord Ballindine and Fanny Wyndham, the ward of Lord Cashel, has at times the sparkle of eighteenth century comedy. There is a great deal of fun in Lord Cashel's presentation, a man cocooned in his own self righteousness and dignity, yet constantly thwarted by Fanny and his son, Lord Kilcullen, with whom he has an uneasy friendship.

One of the best scenes occurs in Chapter XIII "Father and Son" in which the earl's pompous speech is constantly undercut by his son's flippant comments. The conflict between generations, so frequently used for comedy in Trollope's work, is much to the fore here. In this scene Kilcullen is bent on extorting money from his father to pay his gambling debts, while the earl is trying to persuade him to pay court to Fanny, and Trollope skilfully deploys their separate trains of thought. Thoroughly routed by his son's frankness Lord Cashel agrees to pay up and is left reflecting to himself that "the generation was deteriorating."³⁶ It is a timeless

was slightly nettled by The Times review as we can see from the Autobiography, Ch. IV, pp. 66-7.

³⁶ The Kellys and the O'Kellys (The New Pocket Library, 1906), Ch. XIII, p.221.

piece of comedy concerning the gap between parents and children, and it indicates how Trollope was to develop his own brand of comedy in limited areas of human experience, such as the justification of self-interest by moral right, or the sanctions undeservedly claimed by age and rank, or the delusions people entertain about their own motives and characters. Here the situation has particular charm because the son though self-centred and dissolute is still principled, while the father acts not out of greed but family pride and quite touching belief in his son's qualities. The charm extends to Fanny and Lord Ballindine whom Trollope describes as "a man of feeling"³⁷. The story does, indeed, show us a man like Harry Clavering who is growing up and fitting himself for the bread and cheese of love,

Frank was not so very weak a man as he would appear to be when in the society of Blake ... He often felt that the kind of life he was leading - contracting debts which he could not pay, and spending his time in pursuits which were not really congenial to him, was unsatisfactory and discreditable;³⁸

The other plot has more farcical elements, but again shows a young man gaining maturity. Martin Kelly begins by pursuing Anty Lynch for her money, but defending her from her greedy brother, Barry, he comes to value her good nature and sense. Barry Lynch (his name suggests strong echoes of Thackeray found throughout the novel) is

³⁷ ibid., Ch. X, p.157.

³⁸ ibid., Ch. XI, p.172.

a figure from stage comedy: the man dominated by an *idée fixe* - that he must secure his sister's fortune for himself. Like the Earl of Cashel Barry is comforted by delusions as to his qualities and motives. Barry needs his dutch courage, the Earl his puffy eloquence. Notice how he continually over-plays his hand or comes to totally wrong conclusions about people. Like many cunning men Barry is basically stupid:

"These fellows are so confoundedly sharp - I shall never be up to him till I get a tumbler of punch on board," said he to himself, comforting himself with the reflection; "besides, I'm never well able for anything till I get a little warmed."³⁹

The picture is like that of the film cartoon in which the evil cat makes elaborate traps for the mouse, only to be caught in them himself.

The world of The Kellys and the O'Kellys is, of course, a more restricted one than that of The Macdermots, but comprises several particularly Trollopian interests. Thus it represents a stage in the development of his own type of social comedy, with a range of characters, coarsely and vigorously sketched, he was to refine and sharpen in later novels. There is Colligan, given to wiping his hands on the patient's sheets and carrying a fair amount of his native soil beneath his fingernails. There is the lawyer, an unwilling accomplice of Barry Lynch because of the exigencies

³⁹ibid., Ch. IX, pp. 139-40.

of his profession. There is also a strong portrait of an impecunious, fox-hunting parson, whose struggle to live to an appropriate standard on a meagre stipend, portends a special interest Trollope was to develop in later work. In the faithful realism of their presentation Trollope caught that fidelity to the surfaces of life which was to make his name in the next twelve years. In the dilemma of young lovers caught up in parental disapproval, monetary difficulties and personal misunderstandings, he had found the theme which was to occupy so much of his fiction. He also found that the environment of the great house, the hunt and the stable, provided the material most congenial to him. For all these reasons The Kellys is significant in Trollope's career.

The tone of the novel is undeniably coarse, but reveals a good comic sense. Although a longer novel than The Macdermots it sustains interest without the disastrous fall in temperature in the closing stages. Even with two parallel plots of two sets of characters hardly related he moves his story along confidently; there are enough links in the pursuit of the heiress theme and the similarities of the characters' problems to acquit Trollope of the charge of having written two entirely separate tales in one book. Characterisations are bold and particularly successful with the males, Barry Lynch, Lord Ballindine and Lord Kilcullen, whose raffishness promises further development in novels to come:

[to]

"I have no doubt an alligator~~on~~ the banks of the Nile is a fearful creature; - a shark when one's bathing or a jungle tiger when one's out shooting, ought, I'm sure, to be avoided; but no creature yet created, however hungry, or however savage, can equal in ferocity a governor who has to shell out his cash!"⁴⁰

Such dialogue has spring and vivacity. At this stage in his career Trollope is still cautious in the presentation of his heroines, although Fanny Wyndham is given a degree of spirit and charm somewhat reminiscent of a Jane Austen character. Anty Lynch has perforce to play a passive rôle as the object of Barry's schemes, but Trollope still manages to invest this awkward, ill-favoured, young woman with sufficient dogged shrewdness, as well as long-suffering Christian tolerance, to make her credible. The struggles portrayed in The Macdermots of Ballycloran naturally went deeper into human relationships, but in the change of direction Trollope took in his second novel he found his true sphere of social comedy.

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Castle Richmond, for all its roots in the dreadful famine, is perhaps the least Irish in spirit of the novels we are discussing, but it is certainly not un-Trollopian or without merit. Why Trollope went to an Irish subject at this point in his career is difficult

⁴⁰ ibid., Ch. XXX, pp. 508-9.

to tell, but it is possible that the years of travel, 1857 to 1859, focussed his attention on Ireland afresh. Soon after beginning the novel he left Ireland for the last time and settled at Waltham Cross, but the remarkable aspect of this segment of Trollope's career is that he was engaged until the end of 1860 on both Castle Richmond and his great success Framley Parsonage. There was little in the news of the day, apart from the usual agrarian murder or two to suggest that a novel set in Ireland would prove popular, and Trollope later concluded that English readers simply did not like Irish stories.⁴¹ Critical reaction to the book at the time was tepid, while modern critics have treated it with more harshness than it deserves, from Sadleir's "It is a document, not a work of art" to Booth's condemnation of its "unpleasant story" unredeemed by its characters.⁴²

It certainly takes a long time to get started, some hundred pages of silver-fork, before Trollope's imagination is kindled by the Kanturk Hotel with its sawdust floors and pervasive aroma of whisky like rancid butter. Here are ensconced the Mollets^c, father and son, a pair reminiscent of Anthony and Jonas Chuzzlewit. But the roll-call of family relationships has the book off to a very slow start. First, there is Owen Fitzgerald, one of Trollope's amiable

⁴¹ Autobiography, Ch. IX, p.134.

⁴² Sadleir, Commentary, p.387; Booth, Trollope, p.110.

scamps given to mild dissipation among his bachelor friends, but at bottom thoroughly honest, manly and honourable. He loves Lady Clara Desmond, daughter of the Countess, Lady Desmond, a widow thoroughly prejudiced about rank, who is herself in love with Owen. This typical situation is exploited with much grandiloquent language, to which Trollope adds his own heavy comment from time to time. Clara, hardly out of her bony, early teens, is a timid creature with "liquid depth" in her eyes,

which enabled the gazer to look down into them as he would into the green, pellucid transparency of still ocean water.⁴³

Small wonder that Owen is driven to propose in a manner "almost fierce in its energy."⁴⁴ But at the same time he is susceptible to the mother's attractions, as Trollope says:

And how could he not be proud? was she not high in rank, proud in character, beautiful withal, and the mother of Clara Desmond? ⁴⁵

The novelettish atmosphere belongs equally to the presentation of Lady Fitzgerald:

Ah, how very lovely that pale mother was, as she sat still and silent in her own place on the small sofa by the slight, small table which she used!

⁴³ (The New Pocket Library, Castle Richmond (1906), Ch. II, p.16.

⁴⁴ ibid., Ch. III, p.39.

⁴⁵ ibid., Ch. II, p.24.

Her hair was grey, and her eyes sunken, and her lips thin and bloodless; but yet never shall I see her equal for pure feminine beauty, for form and outline, for passionless grace, and sweet, gentle, womanly softness. All her sad tale was written upon her brow; and its sadness and all its poetry.⁴⁶

It would be hard to find a more conventional portrait in the whole of Trollope, and it must be admitted that much of the writing is like this, thin, bloodless and abstract. Yet if the novel were no more than this high-flown romance it would be nothing. The Countess does interest us because of the sexual rivalry with her daughter which adds to her guilt and confusion. She is not shown as altogether despicable for thinking as she does; the basis of her harshness lies in having married without love, and having endured poverty with rank. She is not acting out of spite or greed when she forbids Clara to see Owen, but her actions are distorted by personal needs she cannot control. At the end of the story her love for Owen bursts into the open in terms of an irrational, totally false, denunciation of her daughter:

"I tell you that you do not know her. She is excellent, good, devoted; but cold as ice. She will live among the poor, and grace his table; and he will have all that he wants. In twelve months, Owen, she would have turned your heart to a stone."⁴⁷

But it is she who is utterly cold. Clara is just the opposite and

⁴⁶ibid., Ch. V, p.80.

⁴⁷ibid., Ch. XLIII, p.749.

has matured in finding a relationship with Herbert which will grow, and not become the dead marriage her mother had experienced.

Clara resembles Glencora Palliser in this respect.

Another work-a-day world had come upon her in her womanhood, and as that came she had learned to love a man of another stamp, with a love that was quieter, more subdued, and perhaps, as she thought, more enduring. Whatever might be Herbert's lot in life, that lot she would share. Her love for Owen should never be more to her than a dream.⁴⁸

The Countess, we notice, refers to the poor, but she has felt none of the bond of humanity which extended among all ranks at this time of extreme suffering. Unchanged in her pathetic insistence on rank and title, she has petrified her spirit. Lady Fitzgerald is intentionally brought in for the sake of a comparison and Trollope puts it this way:

"Oh no," said Lady Fitzgerald, "I certainly do not think harshly of her. In her position I should probably have acted as she has done." The difference, however, between them was this, that it was all but impossible that Lady Fitzgerald should not sympathise with her children, while it was almost impossible that the Countess of Desmond should do so."⁴⁹

Even Aunt Letty, who shares Lady Desmond's views on rank, is capable of affection and sympathy, whatever her faults of protestant bigotry and pride.

As I said in my third chapter the idea that love should be

⁴⁸ibid., Ch. XXXVIII, p. 656.

⁴⁹ibid., Ch. XLIII, pp. 736-7.

lord of all is basic to Trollope's work, and as we have seen, it goes beyond the convenient material for a romantic tale; love freely given expands the general store of joy and creates beauty in the world. This point emerges in Chapter XXXIV "Farewell" in which Clara's warmth of spirit is contrasted with the cold prudence of the Countess. Playfully Trollope makes the suggestion that once Herbert had learned of his plight he should have freed Clara,

... he should have argued with her, showing how foolish and imprudent her letter had been, explaining that it behoved her now to repress her feelings, and teaching her that peers' daughters as well as housemaids should look out for situations which would suit them, guided by prudence and a view to the wages, - not follow the dictates of impulse and of the heart.⁵⁰

Through suffering and love, Herbert is linked with that other wider experience which forms the social level of the novel discussed below. In the passage above, however, we are concerned primarily with the romantic statement of love, and it is noticeable that Trollope shows some skill in managing the equation of spontaneous giving and enlightened self-interest, by means of analogies with trade and wages. The expression is light-hearted and teases his readers, until he turns to flattery, for the views of most men and women could not possibly be those of his kind

⁵⁰ ibid., Ch. XXXIV, p.586.

hearted readers!

Thus it seems to me Castle Richmond overcomes the disadvantages of its rhetoric and the machinery of bigamy and reversals of fortune, though it is not free from glaring faults in characterisation and expression. It is hardly possible, for example, to reconcile the fact that the courageous Lady Fitzgerald had in youth been foolish enough to accept the creature we meet in Matthew Mollett. The major characters do appear a trifle insipid and yet the triangular situation between Herbert, Clara and Owen has a peculiar charm; one cannot help responding to Herbert's integrity and to Clara's difficult choice. The Dublin Review thought highly of Trollope's portrayal of Owen, remarking "He creates genuine liking" for him.⁵¹ To the modern reader he is something of a popinjay, and his conversations with the young earl are mawkish in the extreme. The Countess is, on the whole, an interesting failure, for Trollope does not quite succeed in giving enough life and colour to the woman's sorrowing isolation; but she is an interesting attempt at the state of isolation and neurasthenic despair which seems to have fascinated the novelist in human beings.

Sadleir's observation that the Irish novels are untypical of Trollope seems to be amply denied by the characters and methods

⁵¹The Dublin Review (Oct. 1872), p.413.

of this particular novel. Among the minor parts there is a lawyer of vintage stamp, Prendergast, as well as a badly drawn one, Mr. Neversaye Die. The scenes of Prendergast's stay at the castle and the uneasy atmosphere his presence generates, together with the confrontation of Mollett with his real wife at St. Botolph's, broken and half-repentant, emerge as the most memorable in the book.

The weight of Castle Richmond, however, is meant to lie in the events of the Great Hunger, and it is in the exposition of this tragedy that the Dublin Review saw its merit. Elsewhere critics were divided on this point. The Spectator praised Trollope for making the calamity serve as background to the tale:

Their connexion with it is casual, and just close enough to furnish in a suitable manner the secondary machinery and incidents of the story, to supply occasion for some of the comings and goings, the occupations and the talk of the dramatis personae, and to give to the story of the principal personages such a background of local and historical reality as serves to heighten its scenic illusion, and does not injuriously distract attention from the leading theme. The author's management of this portion of his materials is exceedingly judicious. 52

The Saturday Review, on the other hand, found it curious that Trollope should have mixed "a hash of Desmonds and Fitzgeralds with the Indian meal on which his mind was fixed." It objected

⁵²The Spectator, XXXIII (19 May, 1860), p. 477.

to the combination of romance and social documentary: "the milk and the water really should be in separate pails."⁵³

On the whole the serious side of the book is not successfully done. As in The Landleaguers Trollope failed in proportion and tact; the invented story does not do justice to the gravity of the true situation. At least in the last Irish novel the social material arises more genuinely from the lives of the characters. This is even more true of The Macdermots where the drama of Thady and Feemy and Captain Ussher is completely in harmony with the background of Ireland's troubles. Here in Castle Richmond there is fatal discontinuity. The fine ladies from the castle (more English in presentation than Irish) organize the soup kitchens, and are hurt by the people's rudeness about the "yally male". The tone is dangerously near patronizing, where it is not absolutely vulgar, as when Herbert's recollection of the dying woman in the cabin makes him count his blessings even though he is destined to have to work for his living. Yet considered in the abstract Chapter XXXIII "The Last Stage" is almost unbearably painful. In an earlier part of the novel the suffering peasants were posed in a set-piece description like a romantic painting:

⁵³The Saturday Review, IX (19 May 1860), p.643.

A woman was standing there, of whom you could hardly say that she was clothed, though she was involved in a mass of rags which covered her nakedness. Her head was all uncovered, and her wild black hair was streaming round her face. Behind her back hung two children enveloped among the rags in some mysterious way; and round about her on the road stood three others, of whom the two younger were almost absolutely naked. The eldest of the five was not above seven. They all had the same wild black eyes, and wild elfish straggling locks; but neither the mother nor the children were comely.⁵⁴

Perhaps this representation of them as part of the background represents also Herbert's unawakened conscience, for when he enters the cabin of the dying woman and her children he has an experience which burns itself into his memory forever - he too is maturing through personal suffering. Whether this is being over-subtle as to Trollope's meaning or not, the scene is undeniably forceful, with its accumulation of details such as the inertia of the woman, with the mark of death in her face, and the bundle of straw concealing the dead child. Trollope frequently relates the famine to the question which must often have been asked at the time - how could a merciful God have allowed this calamity? And reading this scene one can only conclude that what Trollope had seen of the famine left a scar on his mind and considerable perplexity about the nature of God. One feels that the Christian optimism rings hollow, that the constant insistence on

⁵⁴Castle Richmond, Ch. XVI, pp. 290-1.

the mercy of God made manifest in the improvements which arose from the famine and pestilence covers doubt and religious disillusionment.

From the practical standpoint, Trollope praised, as one might expect of a civil servant, the government's response to this terrible situation, ignoring the fact that it came late and in insufficient quantity. Indeed, for modern taste, he dwells too much on the elements of the case favourable to the ruling caste he represented. It seems unfortunate, for example, that he should emphasize the poor man's ungraciousness on being given Indian maize, or that he should dwell on the burdens of the clergy and small landowners occasioned by the poor relief taxation. These are errors of focus which can be explained only by widespread attitudes in his time towards the working-class, the absence of any comprehensive policy for all ranks of society in terms of humanitarian concerns, and a fatalistic acceptance of the miserable destiny inescapable for a vast element of the population. In addition one has to bear in mind the mid-Victorian distrust of government planning and interference with individual freedoms in trade, a distrust which hampered several schemes for aiding the population. Trollope comments that the government showed its wisdom in abstaining from action as much as in the measures it took in importing maize and setting up relief centres!

Most of the blame for the situation in which a rational disaster could cause such havoc Trollope places among the middle-men and rack-renters who came to prominence after the Act of Union. As Gerald Griffin had said in The Collegians, the departure of the Irish aristocracy had brought about an all round elevation of a lower rank of society, the farmers became gentry or "squireens". Moreover, those absentee landlords described by Maria Edgeworth employed agents, few of whom were as upright and scrupulous as Somers of the Castle Richmond estate. The middle-men, however, and irresponsible landowners seemed most culpable to Trollope, the cottiers under con-acre agreements their most wretched victims:

The fault had been the lowness of education and consequent want of principle among the middle classes; and this fault had been found as strongly marked among the Protestants as it had been amongst the Roman Catholics. Young men were brought up to do nothing. Property was regarded as having no duties attached to it. Men became rapacious and determined to extract the uttermost farthing out of the land within their power, let the consequences to the people on that land be what they might... And thus a state of things was engendered in Ireland which discouraged labour, which discouraged improvements in farming, which discouraged any produce from the land except the potato crop; which maintained one class of men in what they considered to be the gentility of idleness, and another class, the people of the country, in the abjectness of poverty. ⁵⁵

Working from this summary of the situation one might have expected

⁵⁵ ibid., Ch. VII, pp. 103-4. Compare Charles MacKay's Forty Years Recollections from 1830-70, II (London, 1877), pp. 78-110. Sympathy with the people was widespread, but economic thinking dominated

the novelist to have dealt more satirically with, say, Herbert Fitzgerald's awakening responsibility (as Disraeli would certainly have done) and more sardonically with the self-absorption of the Countess, Lady Desmond. But he was either too involved in the imaginary lives of his characters outside the social problem sphere, or too rushed to deal with the implications of his theme as Dickens would have done.

What he does attempt, characteristically, is a fair, broad-minded survey of the calamity without being too dogmatic. In doing so he covers a very wide area: the adulteration of the Indian meal by unscrupulous profiteers, the way in which Protestant and Catholic priests united for a while in meeting the disaster, the commonsense of making relief contingent upon some kind of labour, and the way in which human compassion had usually to succumb to the actuality of the situation. This is a factor of the case which comes over with great poignancy. However necessary it was in principle not to give the food away, the sheer misery of the sufferer impelled a man to do what he could with a coin or a helping hand. This was the discovery of many who travelled to Ireland during the famine years.

As I have said, the broad presentation of the disaster is humane and strong, even though deficient in ideas. In the event

as it was by laissez faire was incapable of evolving satisfactory measures for dealing with the tragedy. See R.D.C. Black, Economic Thought and the Irish Question, 1817-70 (London, 1960).

Trollope seems to conclude that we can only be thankful that men have become more clean in their habits and that, thanks to emigration, farms are more plentiful and workers better off. Moreover legislation had rid the land of the parasitic middleman. This is typical of much middle class thought at the time. Trollope welcomed the disappearance of improvident or racketeering landlords, although he would not go as far on the road of reform as Bright with his views of a peasant proprietary. After a brief period of better conditions in the early fifties, the peasants were once more the victims of countless evictions, caused by the consolidation of farms and the extension of livestock farming to bring more profit. The continuing misery of the poor met with Palmerston's famous stand on the phrase "Tenant's right is landlord's wrong". Trollope remained essentially Palmerstonian, and in the face of the Fenian outbreaks of the mid-sixties went even further on the road to conservatism. Thus his final excursion into Irish affairs in The Landleaguers which I am now going to discuss is perhaps the most disappointingly reactionary of Trollope's books, although its virtues as a realistic story commend it over the romantic drama of Castle Richmond.

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The Landleaguers, unfinished at Trollope's death in 1882, is the work of a tired man, although it is superior to some of his late novels such as Marion Fay and An Old Man's Love. We know from his letters how Trollope faced this last work with the determination which characterised his whole life. When the little boy, Florian Jones, was shot and killed, Trollope wrote: "There was the end of poor Florian Jones and all his troubles,"⁵⁶ but poor Trollope was only half-way through the book. Doggedly he drove his pen on, his writing schedule broken by the need of a second trip to Ireland for factual data, and knowing all the time that his two plots were irreconcilable with his serious intention to describe Ireland's self-destructive course under the equally bad influences of Land League at home and Home Rulers at Westminster. So intractable the material became that in Chapter XLI, "The State of Ireland", he advised those interested in the story to omit this discussion of political matters. The flaw in the book, therefore, is not that "characterisation is submerged in floods of almost literal fact"⁵⁷ but that the trivia of the plots are incompatible with the serious intentions of the book.

Nevertheless, The Landleaguers is a courageous failure. Although it is little more than a long pamphlet disguised as fiction

⁵⁶The Landleaguers (1883), II, Ch. XXX, p.258.

⁵⁷Sadleir, Commentary, p.144.

one cannot help admiring Trollope for tackling such a great theme. It was a tribute to a country he had always loved, but in writing it Trollope broke his golden rule: he wrote, not because he had a story to tell, but because he had to tell a story. In the first Irish tales he had immersed himself in the lives of Thady and Anty Lunch, now he had a mission: to expose the Land League and Gladstone's policies:

It cannot be denied that the promoters of the Land Laws are weak, and that the disciples of the Land-league are strong.⁵⁸

But the issues were too complex for adequate treatment in the novel and we find Trollope making excuses:

In the pages of a novel the novelist can hardly do more than indicate the sources of the troubles which have fallen upon the country, and can hardly venture to deal with the names and characters of those who have been concerned.⁵⁹

But allowing for the difficulty of the subject one still feels disappointed that Trollope's diagnosis is so one-sided and callous. His sympathies are with the land-owning class and against the peasantry, although reading the novel we are much more likely to respond to the conspirators since they are presented in so much more vital terms than the landowners. There are several reasons for Trollope's attitude, shared by many well-intentioned liberals at the time. The first is the horror felt throughout England at the

⁵⁸ The Landleaguers, III, Ch. XLI, p.168.

⁵⁹ ibid., Ch. XXXIX, p.111

murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Thomas Henry Burke, the Permanent Under Secretary.⁶⁰ The second, was Trollope's dislike of Parnell and his party, tacitly in alliance with the League; "My own idea," he wrote to Rose from Limerick on 23 May, 1882, "is that we ought to see the Parnell set put down."⁶¹ Many feared Parnell's parliamentary tactics; Trollope saw him as another political cagliostro, failing completely to see the man's genius as he manouvered between the extreme wing of the League on the one hand and his parliamentary colleagues on the other. Another reason for Trollope's stand is that all his feelings drew him to the side advocated by Sir William Gregory (advocate of the infamous "Quarter Acre Clause") and W.E. Forster, Cavendish's predecessor and Parnell's implacable foe. Indeed, Trollope's thinking on the Land Question is largely Forster's thinking, particularly with regard to stern repressive measures against the League. When Forster pressed for Parnell's arrest early in 1881, "He was backed by the almost universal approval of Englishmen, appalled by the mounting tale of horror and defiance in Ireland."⁶² But as we know from the lessons of empire over the past fifty years no country's bid for independence can be halted by coercion and penal legislation.

⁶⁰ See Tom Corfe, The Phoenix Park Murders, Conflict, Compromise and Tragedy in Ireland, 1879-82 (London, 1968); and J.C. Beckett, A Short History of Ireland (London, 1966), and The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (London, 1966), Ch. XX, pp. 389-404.

⁶¹ Letters, 884, p. 481.

⁶² Corfe, Phoenix Park Murders, p. 109.

As the Land Act of 1881 did not at once bring peace to Ireland Forster pressed for more coercion, making his greatest error in having the Land League proclaimed a criminal association in the winter of 1881. This produced an immediate stepping up of criminal activities, by the Ladies Land League, the "Moonlighters" and the notorious Invincibles, responsible for the Phoenix Park murders of the following spring. Gladstone himself sensed at this supreme moment of tragedy that vengeance and repression sowed dragon's teeth. Turning now to Home Rule he met Forster's demand for more coercion in the following terms:

"If we say we must postpone the question of relieving Great Britain from the enormous weight of the government of Ireland unaided by the people⁶³ till the state of the country is more fit for it, I should answer that the least danger is in going forward at once. It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty." ⁶³

But to Trollope the attitudes of Forster and Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt were right, and Gladstone in his pacific rôle entirely wrong.⁶⁴ The government, he said in the essay inserted into the novel in Chapter XLI, is working by eloquence and philanthropy regardless of political economy. A period of declared rebellion was no time for concessions. Thus Trollope voiced the timeless response⁶⁴ of the authoritarian to the subject people. In The Warden many years ago he had satirised Dickens as Mr. Popular Sentiment;

⁶³quoted Corfe, p.159.

⁶⁴With hindsight we can appreciate how courageous Gladstone's policy was, given the pressures upon him at the time. His first Land Act

in The Landleaguers he played the rôle of Mr. Popular Prejudice. Gladstone was widely blamed for truckling to gangsters and revolutionaries.⁶⁵ Yet he kept his visionary course and produced a Home Rule Bill in 1886. It was defeated and Gladstone went to the country, suffering a crushing defeat at the polls. The public detested Home Rule. The Landleaguers, three years previously, had been one expression of that public voice.

If the rôle and personality of Parnell played its part in forming Trollope's antipathy to the League, the other influence was the growth of agrarian murder which through the medium of press publicity distorted public opinion in England. No one could deny that extremists in the League acted with hideous vindictiveness towards informers and even to those who continued to pay their rents, but Trollope chose, ^{like} ~~as~~ many of his countrymen, to see all Leaguers as Fenian conspirators and to be blind to the iniquities of his own side. There were moderates in the League and men of genius, none more so than its founder, Michael Davitt, the story of whose sufferings in English prisons from 1870-78 equals many tales of the League's atrocities.⁶⁶ Histories of the period can only make us marvel at

(1870) admitted that landlord power should be broken. The Land Act (1881) carried this principle a little further. It had been shown through the Act of Disestablishment of 1869 that tenants would purchase land: over 6,000 of 8,400 had taken option by 1880 of buying their holdings on former church lands (Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, p.369).

⁶⁵ See H. Ausubel, In Hard Times, Reformers Among the late Victorians (London, 1960), pp. 284-5.

⁶⁶ For an account of his life see F. Sheehy-Skeffington, Michael

at the heroism and fortitude of the Irish people. After centuries of misrule and neglect Ireland underwent the Great Famine of 1847-49 which branded the national conscience. The conditions which produced the Land League were exactly those caused by the exploitation of absentee landlords and deliberate neglect of indigenous resources and manpower about which Swift inveighed in the eighteenth century. The squalid cabins and ragged, half-starved inhabitants described by William Carleton in the 1830s were still the same fifty years later. Evictions, rack-renting, disease and starvation gave the spur to the many secret societies which sprang up in the course of Ireland's history. But it was the period of a second Great Famine caused by crop failures in 1879, which created the League. William O'Brien reported to the Freeman's Journal from County Mayo:

Air sick with the rotten smell of the potato-blight,
Day after day nothing but lightning and rain to spread
the havoc... the landlords won't abate a farthing and
shout down the cry of distress as all lying and acting.⁶⁷

The desperate impetus to the League Trollope did not consider, but fell back on the comfortable Victorian myth that the desire for tenant right was partly the sickness of money greed to which the Land Act simply pandered. We are not far from Mr. Bounderby and

Davitt, Revolutionary, Agitator and Labour Leader, London (1908), 1967.

⁶⁷ quoted Corfe, Phoenix Park Murders p.66.

his vision of the hands who expected venison from gold spoons.

Unfortunately, Trollope's political thinking is not marked by vision any more than by any of Bright's sense of moral duty. Two sacred cows filled Trollope's field of vision. The first was the inalienable right of property and the second, the laws of Manchester free-trade in which government had no right to interfere. The Land Act of 1881 tampered with the rights of property, and freedom of sale, one of Gladstone's notorious three 'f's, was no more than "wholesale confiscation."⁶⁸ Fixity of tenure was simply a romantic notion, and fair rent ran counter to everything Trollope knew of political economy. Reading this section of The Landleaguers is like coming across a parody of The Chimes. The government, says Trollope, has no right to interfere in the bargain between landlord and tenant. Caveat emptor is the golden rule:

I say that the tenant who undertakes to pay for land that which the land will not enable him to pay had better go, - under whatever pressure.⁶⁹

The solution is the Englishman's evasion of responsibility - emigration. Trollope hardly seems conscious of the political inexpediency of this conclusion, although he blames the Irish exiles in America with some justice for the aggressive policies of the League.

⁶⁸ The Landleaguers, III, Ch. XLI, p.164.

⁶⁹ ibid., p.156.

A dream of Home Rule has made them [the peasantry] what they are, and thus they have been roused into waking life, by the American spirit, which has been imported into the country.⁷⁰

Trollope all his life cherished a dream of the simple, loquacious, lovable Irish peasant, nourished on memories of Lever's stories, the anecdotes of friends like Sir William Gregory and the Hon. Frederick Leveson Gower, and of those poor, patient creatures who obeyed their priests during the Famine and went on paying their rents and doffing their caps until they dropped down dead. He failed to understand the new spirit of independence fired by Parnell and men of his calibre. As early as 1848 Trollope had formed an opinion of the docile nature of the people, writing to his mother in the spring.

Here in Ireland the meaning of the word Communism - or even social revolution - is not understood. The people have not the remotest notion of attempting to improve their worldly condition by making the difference between the employer and the employed less marked. Revolution here means a row... My own idea is that there is no ground to fear any general rising either in England or Ireland. I think there is too much intelligence in England for any large body of men to look for any sudden improvement; and not enough intelligence in Ireland for any body of men at all to conceive the possibility of social improvement.⁷¹

But after thirty years, thanks to American aid, there were trained men and intelligent leaders; Trollope had begun to realise this

⁷⁰ ibid., I, Ch. III, p.43.

⁷¹ Letters, 14, pp. 6-7.

and the knowledge led him into intransigency and despair. The Landleaguers is the embodiment of jingoism widespread in England at the time for a number of reasons.

In the operations of the League English opinion saw Fenianism all over again, completely misreading the nature of Davitt and his moderate allies as Fenian gangsters. It was natural, therefore, for Trollope to insist on coercion, and the rule of law, and to maintain that Ireland had to remain under English control. He believed that the Irish members at Westminster showed "unbridled audacity" in their campaign.⁷² Other factors militated against a clear understanding of the problem among middle-class opinion. The very idea of an independent Ireland raised the napoleonic ghost. Moreover, the changing pattern of trade militated against a solution, for already by the seventies Germany and America were aggressive trading competitors; English merchants did not want a future trade rival on her doorstep.

These were perhaps not vital in Trollope's thinking, but they permeated the clubs in which he moved. Similarly, though no bigot about religion, he shared anxieties about the political and social implications of opening a door for Rome which Home Rule unquestionably promised. Perhaps only a Dickens or a Tolstoy could have surmounted such a weight of national self-interest.

⁷²The Landleaguers, III, Ch. XLI, p.162.

Trollope, being so firmly of his milieu, merely showed that another forty years of rebellion and bloodshed were inevitable.

Relating the political theory to its actual story reveals the novel's weakness. At best we have a broad picture of the people harried, bewildered, oppressed. As one incident follows another we see trust break down between master and man, between labourers and tenant farmers, and finally between whole families. The rebels change from a group of high-spirited yokels playing tricks on their masters to a highly organized Mafia. Trollope describes this declension well. At the start a smouldering resentment surrounds Philip Jones. "Now suddenly he found himself as though surrounded by a nest of hornets."⁷³ Then open defiance, but not physical violence, is noticeable. At last blood is shed: Florian's murder is one of a series which the law cannot prevent. The rôle rumour plays in undermining security is skilfully suggested, and gradually a situation is produced where human relations are poisoned by suspicion and fear. The murders of Cavendish and Burke are merely referred to but they represent a climax to the lawlessness which threatens to bring anarchy to the land. Another aspect of the tragedy is shown in the apathy and indifference of the people towards another murder in County Galway. And then the summary execution of informers and even innocent people begins:

⁷³ ibid., I, Ch. II, p.29.

"A new and terrible aristocracy was growing up among them, - the aristocracy of hidden firearms."⁷⁴ The murders increase and with a massacre of a whole family in which some of their kinsmen are implicated Trollope is writing of the ultimate breakdown of society.

Any man might be got rid of silently, and there need be no injurious results ... Who was to be the keeper of the list and decide finally as to the victims? Then suddenly a man went, and no one knew why he went. He was making a fence between two fields, and it was whispered that he had been cautioned not to make the fence. At any rate he had been stoned to death, and though there must have been three at least at the work, no one knew who had stoned him. Men began to whisper among each other, and women also, and at last it was whispered to them that they had better not whisper at all. Then they began to feel that not only was secrecy to be exacted from them, but they were not to be admitted to any participation in the secrecy.⁷⁵

In this picture we approach Orwell's nightmare of existence. Trollope's lifelong interest in power as a theme of fiction is often evident in terms of individual encounters; it is unusual to find him portraying with such insight the machinery and effects of totalitarian power.

Unfortunately, the characters in the foreground are scarcely credible, a romantic hero, Captain Yorke/Clayton who pursues the heroine, Edith Jones, when he is not pursuing Lax and the other conspirators, and stereotypes such as the political priest and the bullying landowner. Unwisely, Trollope tries to link the

⁷⁴ibid., III, Ch. XLVI, p.248.

⁷⁵ibid., Ch. XLV, pp. 227-8.

boycotting activities of the conspirators with the hunt, which trivialises a serious issue. One of the worst crimes of the boycotters, it appears, is to ruin the coverts. A similar lapse of taste is apparent in making the boy, Florian, a victim of terrorism and his death emerges roughly on the level of being without servants or having to sleep on unironed sheets. Another blunder is the character of Gerald O'Mahony, an American-Irish patriot, who preaches that land should be confiscated and the proprietors reimbursed by the State.⁷⁶ Booth found him the most memorable character in the book, but his conception to me seems as theatrical as the backstage dressing-room atmosphere in which he so often functions. For through him the secondary story is raised, an impossible farrago concerning his daughter, an opera singer, pursued by her manager and an aristocratic admirer, Lord Castlewell.

The Landleaguers is a melancholy book, full of the crotchets of old age, and perhaps best forgotten, for it is an inappropriate epitaph to a generous spirited author. Captain Clayton calls Daly a desponding man, and one feels this is true of Trollope's last

⁷⁶This character may have been modelled on Henry George, a member of the League, who advocated land nationalisation and extreme measures for dealing with the landowners. A John O'Mahony was also active in conducting fund-raising activities for the League in New York. See Desmond Ryan, The Fenian Chief, A Biography of James Stephen (Dublin, 1963), p.362.

novel. A sourness of mood alien to his usual frame of mind is noticeable in a dozen fragments of the action: a bigotted Protestant takes morsels of meat to the Catholics in the poor house on Fridays; the lawyer, notes Trollope, "is absolved from all the laws common to humanity";⁷⁷ the modern girl sacrifices her purity in pursuit of women's rights; these familiar targets usually so playfully exploited in his books are sombre, almost misanthropic now. When Clayton is wounded the author promises we shall see him in action no more, and we feel the book grinding to a standstill. But saddest of all, Trollope fails to write the tragedy of Ireland he wanted to write; nor did he adequately convey the compassion and love he felt for its people.

⁷⁷The Landleaguers, II, Ch. XXII, p.100.

Chapter Seven

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Cum vivere ipsum turpe sit nobis
 - When even to draw the breath of
 life at such a time is a disgrace
 to us!

- Trollope's translation in
The Life of Cicero.¹

So far we have examined Trollope's views on individual fulfilment - or its absence - in love, marriage and the home. Trollope's ideal of behaviour has been shown to be based on a generously Christian outlook and a code of gentlemanly behaviour, difficult to define, but predominantly composed of "manliness" - a favourite word in his vocabulary - probity, unselfishness, a firm sense of duty and a sense of humour. We have seen how these virtues are inculcated in young people within the family unit, and brought to their fullest expression when they marry and learn further lessons in love - of reciprocal service and a balance of the qualities each sex is endowed with. Throughout the thesis I have been stressing the continuity of Trollope's application of these simple principles, and I have maintained that despite the strains upon the individual caused by social and material

¹The Life of Cicero, I (London, 1880), Ch. 1, p.5.

developments of the age, Trollope's philosophy stands firm and sure, although the psychological probing of his later books reflects - not a change in his thought, so much as an increased tendency to balance viewpoints and show the complexity of moral judgements. Consistency and continuity, then, may well be said to operate with regard to the wider sphere of existence, work and social intercourse, I now wish to consider, as well as to the personal sphere of love and marriage. But since this is also my final chapter I must review and consolidate what has gone before, so I begin by applying Trollope's ideals of conduct to public affairs. Next I offer a range of illustrations arising from the statement of Trollope's philosophy, and finally I discuss The Three Clerks and The Way We Live Now as social satires.

By examining the Autobiography and articles from the Fortnightly Review, the Pall Mall Gazette and from St. Paul's which Trollope edited from 1867 to 1870 we can form a clear picture of his views as a citizen on the social, cultural and political climate of his age. Already some of his views have been explored. His stand on the Irish question has been described in the preceding chapter, and in his attitude to female rights I have indicated that he is no original thinker; he is, rather, the educated middlebrow Englishman with strong conservative emotional ties putting the brake on an intellectual acceptance of liberalism. As

an instance of this notice his article "Our Programme for the Liberals",² a moderate, orthodox, and thoroughly conventional statement of legislative priorities for the Liberal Party: a state system of education, first, with no further extension of the suffrage; second, an attempt to solve the Ireland problem; then a series of reforms - the criminal code, game laws, poor laws, entail, army and navy, and municipal government. These are the proposals one might expect of a vast number of civilised, middle-class gentlemen, and are typical of Trollope's view of himself as "an advanced, but still a conservative liberal."³ Though he is far from rigorous in his thinking, it would be incorrect to regard him as politically naive.⁴ His journalism shows a trenchant analysis, at times, of particular problems such as the question of Ireland, and of American political institutions. But

²St. Paul's Magazine, I (Mar. 1868), pp. 659-74. Sadleir does not list this article (Bibliography, p.229), but it has distinctly Trollopian characteristics, as does "The New Cabinet, and what it will do for us" (St. Paul's, III (Feb. 1869), pp. 538-51.

³Autobiography, Ch. XVI, p.251. Evidence of his taste and wide interest is apparent from the extent of his library. See the Catalogue of his books, the Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, privately printed in 1874.

⁴This part of the "legend" discussed in my Chapter Two arose largely because of Trollope's deprecatory account of his election experiences at Beverley in 1868. For example Arthur Pollard, Trollope's Political Novels (Hull, 1968), showed he was not quite the type he depicted in Sir Thomas Underwood.

as a novelist he eschews polemic. He "takes his fling", as he puts it, at the political doings of the day⁵ but as a novelist he is committed to men not measures, so to speak - in direct contrast to his fictional politicians, Monk, Finn, Palliser and the rest. In any case, the social problem or propaganda novel as it was practised by Kingsley or Reade had little appeal to him, quite apart from the difficulty of making politics interesting, as he remarked of Phineas Finn.⁶ His vital concern was the political mind and motive, which comes down to the analysis of character. Likewise, as regards religious subjects we find the liveliest interest in his journalism in matters such as church endowments and curate^{of} incomes, from the viewpoint of the well-informed layman. Doctrinal or sectarian controversy he avoided, and although he had no liking for free-thinking or ~~of~~ the nonconformists, I should say he was privately sceptical on the whole subject.⁷ Possibly his personal religion which plainly disliked the Sunday ritual of even the most broad type came closest to the Ciceronian idea of that dominans in nobis deus. My point remains, however, that in religion as in politics, so far as his novels go, we are

⁵ Autobiography, Ch. X, p.159.

⁶ ibid., Ch. XVII, p.272.

⁷ His preference for the easy-going tolerance of the old-style churchman can be seen in his articles for the Pall Mall Gazette, issued in book form in 1866 as Clergymen of the Church of England. See also Letters, 765, pp. 430-1 for an indication of his sympathy towards free inquiry into doctrine. In North America, I, Ch. XIX, he shows no disapproval of people who tend "to regard religion from an altogether worldly point of view." (p.432).

meant to think of the qualities of character that make up the foreign secretary or the archdeacon, the attitudes of mind that go along with the pursuit of cabinet rank or the function of pastoral responsibility. As he says at the end of The Last

Chronicle of Barset:

I would plead, ... that my object has been to paint the social and not the professional lives of clergymen; and that I have been led to do so, firstly, by a feeling that as no men affect more strongly, by their own character, the society of those around than do country clergymen, so, therefore, their social habits have been worth the labour necessary for painting them; and secondly, by a feeling that though I, as a novelist, may feel myself entitled to write of clergymen out of their pulpits, as I may also write of lawyers and doctors, I have no such liberty to write of them in their pulpits.⁸

The crux of the matter is that delineation of character in its widest sense is for Trollope "the highest merit" of a novel.⁹

In the Pallisers, for example:

I have endeavoured to depict the faults and frailties and vices, - as also the virtues, the graces, and the strength of our highest classes;¹⁰

Notice particularly the tenor of his remarks on The Prime Minister in a fine passage of the Autobiography which directs our attention to the qualities desirable in the public figure.¹¹ It is a statement

⁸(1951), Ch. LXXXIV, p.451.

⁹Autobiography, Ch. IX, p.143.

¹⁰Ibid., Ch. X, p.156.

¹¹See Ch. XX, pp. 308-9.

of qualities which he had discerned to a large extent in Lord Palmerston about whom he had written a monograph at the time when he was composing Phineas Finn, a period for him of intense political thought and activity between 1866 and 1868.¹² This leads us to Trollope's central beliefs regarding the ethics of public life which I now wish to examine.

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Towards the end of his life, when he was reviewing his experiences and accumulated wisdom for the Autobiography (which is perhaps one of his most careful pieces of writing) - some ten years after the political period referred to above - he returned to a life-long interest in the politician, patriot, poet Cicero. He produced two essays, "Cicero as a Politician" and "Cicero as a Man of Letters" which appeared in the Fortnightly Review on April 1 and September 1, 1877, and were subsequently used in The Life of Cicero, published in two volumes in 1880. Cicero had always held great fascination for the novelist. One of his earliest publications, a review of Charles Merivale's The History of the Romans Under the Empire for the Dublin University

¹²The work on Palmerston was carried on while Trollope wrote Phineas Finn but the monograph did not appear until 1882. At this period also Trollope contributed political articles to the Fortnightly Review, St. Paul's, and the Pall Mall Gazette.

Magazine (June 1851) had included an apology for Cicero, which he had been obliged to omit because of its length. Publication of Froude's sketch of Caesar's life (1879) finally gave him the impetus he needed. He found Froude's book "one prolonged censure"¹³ on Cicero, so he set out to vindicate the life of this Roman patriot.

Why did Cicero appeal so strongly to him? The answer may be given quite briefly in a summary of the attitudes Trollope reveals to his subject. First, Cicero was a novus homo who, though of a well to do family, competed honourably for a career among the nobility. This matter of origin and pertinacity of ambition would suggest parallels to Trollope in his own life and in the social situation of his own time. We find him indeed making frequent analogies between Caesar's Rome and England during the last quarter of the century. He says, for example, that great men today bend the knee and bargain for ribands, lieutenancies and titles. Success is our goal just as much as it was Cicero's. Moreover, there is "a growing feeling in favour of Caesarism and success which has ceased to be shocked at means."¹⁴ This brings us to the second point, that Cicero devoted his life to justice, the rule of law, the maintenance of a crumbling republic. This

¹³The Life of Cicero, I, Ch. 1, p.4.

¹⁴"Cicero as a Politician", The Fortnightly Review, XXI, 124 (1 Apr. 1877), p.496.

admiration for a life of public service must surely confound any critic who denigrates Trollope's own political aspirations as the kind of social ambition noticeable in Thackeray's wish to join the best club in London. The third point of contact Trollope has with his subject is Cicero's character. He appears to Trollope as above all a man of conscience, a hard-working, just, and loyal man, also, politically, a moderate with conservative tendencies - like Trollope himself. He was truly courageous, because he knew fear and at times succumbed to it. Cato, says Trollope, was pure, but kept from places of sin; "Cicero did go where men defile themselves; but he kept himself clean."¹⁵ Or again, "A man no doubt may teach virtue and live viciously, as Sallust did. But it was not so with Cicero."¹⁶ Trollope admired Cicero for his human weaknesses; he was vain, hypersensitive to criticism and inclined to periods of despair. In such a catalogue of human potentialities we can see the figure of Plantaganet Palliser at once. Consider what St. Bungay says of the ideal head of state:

One wants in a Prime Minister a good many things, but not very great things. He should be clever but need not be a genius; he should be conscientious but by no means strait-laced; he should be cautious but never timid, bold but never venturesome; he should have a good digestion, genial manners, and, above all, a thick skin. ¹⁷

¹⁵ ibid., p.504.

¹⁶ "Cicero as a Man of Letters", The Fortnightly Review, XXII, 129 (1 Sept. 1877), p.417.

¹⁷ The Prime Minister (1880). Ch. XLI, pp. 4-5.

Cicero, Trollope felt, was ever scrupulous in fighting tyranny and misgovernment and resisting attempts to seduce him by bribery. No one could accuse Cicero of fouling his hands by illegal gain, but at the same time he was fallible, he showed weakness and he wavered in his conduct. Ruth ap Roberts believes that the breadth of Trollope's irony relates to this kind of ambiguity in Cicero's nature and rightly fastens on Cicero's honesty as the keynote of Trollope's own code of the gentleman.¹⁸

These points need amplifying because of their importance in Trollope's presentation of the man in society and public life. As we read his work on Cicero we see how readily Trollope responds to the human side of his subject - the crises of moral decision in which human weakness sometimes defeats the noble end and circumstances may well defeat the absolute of moral conduct. The individual himself is pushed by irrationalities which confound the rules he has set for himself or which society has pressed upon him. Thus in a number of novels we are offered the ironic spectacle of people being driven to actions inimical to their well-being or happiness.

The man who saw his duty clearly on this side in the morning shall, before the evening come, recognize it on the other; and then again, and again, and yet again the vane shall go round.¹⁹

¹⁸Unpub. diss. Ruth ap Roberts, "The Irony of Anthony Trollope", No. 67-6404, University of California, 1966. At the time of writing this chapter I have not had the opportunity of seeing more than the Abstract.

¹⁹The Life of Cicero, Ch. I, p.19.

Trollope is keenly aware of the varieties of human response which may produce incorrigibly ambiguous action:

But the same man may, at various periods of his life, and on various days at the same period, be scrupulous and unscrupulous, impractical and practical, as the circumstances of the occasion may affect him. At one moment the rule of simple honesty will prevail with him. "Fiat justitia, ruat coelum." "Si fractus illabatur orbis Impavidum ferient ruinae." At another he will see the necessity of a compromise for the good of the many.²⁰

Perhaps this indicates the most significant of all the consistencies in Trollope I have been attempting to describe in this thesis. We have only to consider the multiple viewpoints on moral action raised in the John Bold, Grantly, Harding situation or the dilemma of Mr. Crawley to recognize a life-long interest of Trollope's in the ambiguities of the moral life. Indeed, later books seem to explore with the kind of humour and detachment Cicero shows in his moral essays the conflicts arising out of the relationship between virtuous conduct and certain sets of circumstances.²¹ It seems to me that novels like Cousin Henry, Dr. Wortle's School, or Kept in the Dark are earnest jokes of this kind. The paradox is heightened, of course, by the pressure and the appeal of social norms to which Trollope also subscribes. Time and time again he asserts that man departs from social mores

²⁰ ibid., pp. 19-20.

²¹ I am thinking of Trollope's enjoyment of some of Cicero's hypothetical cases, such as "Should we keep faith with a robber?" See "Cicero as a Man of Letters", p.421.

at his peril. There is always a sound basis for conduct in the times social norm, but society can ~~some~~/ be wrong, as we see in varying degrees in The Vicar of Bullhampton, Dr. Wortle's School, He Knew He Was Right and even The Eustace Diamonds. Thus the body of Trollope's fiction is enriched by a fascinating texture of moral ambiguities. To give an example, it might appear that from the standpoint of the man who loves justice and honesty there can be no compromise; truth must indeed be stronger than friendship or any other consideration. But there are cases in which charity and compassion should be served first. This could be said of the Mrs. Askerton situation in The Belton Estate or of the Lady Mason-Sir Peregrine Orme plot in Orley Farm, certainly of the circumstances surrounding the Peacocks in Dr. Wortle's School. Awareness of the complexity of moral actions and a conviction of the value of virtue in human affairs are vital in Trollope's treatment of man in society. Once again we must return to The Life of Cicero, and we find Trollope praising in the second volume the wisdom of De Officiis, a treatise which defines honestum. Trollope finds it hard to translate the term, which means more than honour and honesty alone, but all that is "manly, graceful, honest, and decorous."²²

Thus we come to see in Trollope a more complex sense of existence than was at first apparent, a quality which almost eludes

²²The Life of Cicero, II, Ch. XIII, p.384. Trollope adds that Lord Chesterfield's advice to his son was thin counsel compared with Cicero's.

definition. Perhaps this is the reason for Booth's "chaos of criticism" which I referred to in my first chapter. For many years it was customary to see in Trollope the solid, untroubled, morally secure embodiment of the Victorian world. His so-called mirroring of the surface of everyday life reinforced an idea of the calm, well ordered and uncomplicated nature of his fiction. Recently, with more understanding of the ferment of ideas and movements in the Victorian period, some critics have stressed, perhaps with too strong an emphasis, his doubt and scepticism. Others have felt that he is at "the mercy of a divided mind" as John Hagan put it.²³ I prefer to think of his flexibility of mind, as a capacity to reflect many viewpoints and to look with charity and compassion on moral problems - a positive asset to him as a novelist. Yet with the ambiguity there is a groundwork of the principles I have related so far to his study of Cicero, so that we are never left in a moral vacuum, never in doubt as to the contempt he feels for lying, greed, hypocrisy, or egotism.

Trollope's interest in another great man provides further evidence of his attitudes towards public affairs and human responsibilities to society. That man is Thomas Carlyle. "An Essay on Carlylism" appeared in St. Paul's Magazine of December, 1867, and the author, most probably Trollope, takes Carlyle to task for his

²³"The Divided Mind of Anthony Trollope", N.C.F., XIV, 1 (June, 1959), pp. 1-26.

possibilities about the contemporary situation and the decline of moral conduct.²⁴ Carlyle's prophecy, he declares, and Ruskin's also, has become a prolonged cry of woe. One notices at once that Trollope rephrases Carlyle's prophecy into the assertion in the words of an old song "It is good to be honest and true," and the whole tone of the piece is constructive and optimistic.²⁵ With outrageous over-simplification Trollope cheerfully demonstrates that despite what is heard of "this and that terribly bad commercial explosion"²⁶ there is less buccaneering, violence and crime in man's dealings with man than there was in the past. The sub-title of the essay "Containing the very melancholy story of a shoddy maker and his mutinous maid-servant" suggests the focus on poor workmanship and various kinds of insubordination on the part of the governed which Trollope takes as major points in Carlyle's case. If the world demands shoddy, Trollope points out, why make a man feel guilty about producing it. Indeed, he goes on to argue for cheap products for the modern consumer, since many

²⁴ Attribution to Trollope is speculative (Sadleir, Bibliography, p.229) but its plain argument, use of cliché, ponderous humour, and above all its similarity to judgements on Carlyle in the Autobiography, Ch. XX, p.304 make its authorship fairly obvious.

²⁵ A cliché much used by Trollope. See Barchester Towers, Ch. XLVI, p.454, and The Eustace Diamonds, Ch. XXXV, p.314.

²⁶ "An Essay on Carlylism", p.302.

prefer a coat or a glove that shall be changed frequently and purchased at a low price to one intended to last, the coat for years, or the glove for months.²⁷

If the arguing is undistinguished its tendency is towards the Ciceronian at least in recognizing the difficulty of absolutes, in refraining from judgement, in leaning to compromise, and not least in favour of optimism and encouragement rather than coercion and defeatism. Tackling Carlyle's criticism of fiction as the cousin of lying, Trollope answers moderately and with dignity "that with much lack of strength there is a preponderance of truth."²⁸ He concludes with a ringing statement of his faith in the future, which must serve as a corrective to the idea that in his later works there is much of despair or even cynicism. Consider the following quotation in the light of a similar judgement in the Autobiography (Ch. XX) some ten years later:

For the world at large, we know that God is still over us, looking after it. For this England of ours, not anticipating for it any perpetuity of national greatness, we are content to see, as we think we do see, that it is accomplishing its appointed work in populating the earth with civilised and instructed human beings, knowing that as men have increased in numbers, so have vice, and greed, and lying increased, - but thinking, also, that as men have increased in numbers, so have high hearts, and pure spirits, and neighbourly love, with patriotism and philanthropy, increased among us.²⁹

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²⁷ibid., p.305.

²⁸ibid.

²⁹Ch. XX, p.305.

My two lines of discussion so far have indicated through examples of Trollope's attitude to Cicero and to Carlyle that he is likely to poise his heroes in public life between the claims of honestum and the utile, and that he will depict the social situation in charitable, hopeful terms. The career of Phineas Finn provides a useful example. He starts out a callow, self-centred youth with strong ambitions, learns the terms in which he can expect to operate effectively (not without much suffering and disappointment), and finally reaches cabinet rank. It is to be noted that even though his appearances in the later political novels are brief, there are always touches of character and action to show his progress towards political maturity. In terms of his growth one of the significant events is his self-control towards the end of The Prime Minister when he is attacked by Quintus Slide in a gutter newspaper. He is a very different man then from the impetuous member for Loughshane, who disgusts Barrington Erle with his talk of measures not men. Party allegiance is one of the first compromises Finn must learn to make with his ideals of independent virtue. Gradually the choices Finn is called upon to make between what seems like false expediency and high principle grow more perplexing. Should he, as a reforming liberal of the younger generation, stand for Loughton as the nominee of Lord Brentford? Finn reasons that he should not be over-scrupulous

You must take the world as you find it,
with a struggle to be something more honest
than those around you. Phineas, as he preached
to himself this sermon, declared to himself that
they who attempted more than this flew too high
in the clouds to be of service to men and women upon
earth.³⁰

This is putting in very simple terms one of the crucial points
advanced by Henry Taylor in his manual, The Statesman (1836),
a work Trollope probably knew, and may well have re-read during
the extensive preparations he made to equip himself to write this
set of novels.³¹ The passage in question occurs in Chapter XVI
"On the ethics of politics" and discusses honesty which is basic
to nearly all Trollope's novels. The argument is so relevant to
the direction of my thesis from individual to public themes that
I must quote Taylor on this point at some length. The difficulty,
he says, lies in ^{reconciling} ~~resolving~~ private, individual morality with public
life: "The law of truth stands first in the code of private morality"³²
But in the context of legislating such rigid morality would cause
stalemate. Therefore a compromise has to be made:

For when a member of a government, advocating a
particular measure which he does not sincerely
approve, is believed by himself, or by others, to
be committing the same violation of the principle
of truth as if he were telling a falsehood in private
life, then indeed he himself incurs the guilt of such
a falsehood and the corruption of conscience attending

³⁰ Phineas Finn, Ch. XXXI, p. 356.

³¹ It is probable that Trollope knew Taylor personally to judge from a
letter written by Mrs. Pollock to Taylor in July 1869. At any rate
Mrs. Pollock passed on Trollope's congratulations (Taylor had been
awarded the K.C.M.G.) and some rather sharp comments on being at

it, and the cause of truth suffers by his example and his impunity. But if, on the other hand, he advocates what he does not approve with a clear conscience, and stands, qua statesman, in his own apprehension and in that of others, under a well-understood absolution from speaking the truth in particular cases, then there is in reality no more violation of the principle of truth at large than there is of his own conscience. For falsehood ceases to be falsehood when it is understood on all hands that the truth is not expected to be spoken.³³

Taylor might well add: "A statesman is engaged, certainly, in a field of action which is one of great danger to truthfulness and sincerity,"³⁴ for his argument reeks of policy. He concludes that moralists must allow statesmen:

a free judgment namely, though a most responsible one, in the weighing of specific against general evil, and in the perception of perfect or imperfect analogies between public and private transactions, in respect of the moral rules by which they are to be governed.³⁵

To Trollope this must have seemed reasonable but hard to accept and one is inclined to doubt that he ~~ever~~ did. At least in the area of this debate he found his imagination fully exercised, but I think its air of Machiavelli must have been abhorrent to him. One

peace with oneself. (I note that other remarks in this letter were wrongly attributed by Booth, Anthony Trollope, p.8 to Taylor), The Correspondence of Henry Taylor, ed. E. Dowden (London, 1888), p.296. Trollope also had in his library R.H.Hutton's Studies in Parliament (1866) and Charles Buxton's The Ideas of the Day on Policy, both of which he reviewed in the Fortnightly Review.

³²The Statesman (Cambridge, 1927), p.80.

³³ibid., Ch. XVI, pp. 82-83.

³⁴ibid., p.84.

³⁵ibid., p.85.

has only to recall how repellent Bacon's advocacy of political expediency was to him to feel that Trollope might well have reacted against the doctrine expressed by Taylor.³⁶ Certainly the ethics of law, a matter of similar equations between fidelity to truth or to one's client, was one which perplexed him throughout his literary career, as I said in Chapter Four. Phineas Finn, however, did not at this point have the qualities of a statesman and in the second part of the novel his doubts about patronage increased. Finn's pangs of conscience, exacerbated by Laurence Fitzgibbons's irresponsibility on the one hand and Mr. Bunce's needling on the other, combined with Slide's attacks, contribute to his decision to side with Turnbull in a measure to disfranchise seven boroughs which brings down the government. Mr. Monk, an able and honourable adviser is angry with Finn:

telling him that his conscience was of that restless, uneasy sort which is neither useful nor manly...
 "There must be compromises, and you should trust to others who have studied the matter more thoroughly than you, to say how far the compromise should go, at the present moment."³⁷

Finally, Finn becomes embroiled in Irish tenant-right and sacrifices his career to what Barrington Erle calls "a bad cause".³⁸ Despite Lord Cantrip's advice (couched in very much the terms of

³⁶ See Michael Sadleir, "Trollope and Bacon's Essays", The Trollopian, I, 1 (Summer, 1945), pp. 21-34.

³⁷ Phineas Finn, Ch. XLVII, p.96. Compare Taylor, Ch. IX, "Concerning the conscience of a statesman".

³⁸ ibid., Ch. LXVII, p.336.

Taylor's manual) in Ch. LXVIII, he acts in consort with Monk in a measure which leads Mr. Gresham to dissolve the House. One cannot mistake Trollope's regard for the convictions of his hero, but all the same Finn's action achieves next to nothing and merely translates him to the political wilderness.

Continuing his education in Phineas Redux the hero returns to the political arena after the death of his wife with more moderate expectations of what he can achieve. Possibly through anxiety about too much political discussion Trollope concentrates on his hero's social adventures as the centre of the book and enlivens the political material through the clash of Daubeny and Gresham and other figures closely resembling politicians of the day. There is still plenty of politics in the novel but Trollope has carefully built up the story-line with Kennedy's madness, Laura's unhappiness and the Bonteen murder of which Finn is wrongly accused.

The political theme once again probes the question of honesty versus expediency, on the level this time of the policy and management of a party. Again, the ideas embodied in Taylor's manual seem to be much in evidence, the Conservatives acting out the principles of real politik under the ruthless Daubeny, who "had achieved his place by skill, rather than principle."³⁹ The

³⁹ Phineas Redux, Ch. V., p.56. Note that Daubeny embodies some of the attributes of Taylor's successful politician, an indication of Trollope's mixed feelings about the manual. Monk, we noticed, advocated compromise but stood in the end for a principle.

hypocrisy of his leadership is revealed by his introduction of a disestablishment bill in order to keep his party in power. "A party has to be practical"⁴⁰ notes Trollope drily and throughout the ensuing battle between Conservatives and Liberals he shows the complexity of the legislative process. It is easy to see in the satire on the Conservative party (Daubeny is very harshly presented) an attitude of disillusion with the political process.

This is the view Professor Cockshut takes:

Parliament appears in these books as interesting, magnificent, desirable, and fundamentally futile... he hinted, delicately but definitely, that politics were a sham and settled nothing.⁴¹

I think this is too strong a judgement, for it seems to me that Trollope on the whole accepts the ponderous machinery of the party system with all its faults, the clinging to power, the factitious independence of Turnbull, and the slow progress of government, as productive of good in the long term. The remarkable quality of the novel is its balancing of attitudes which make up the spectrum of political life and which safeguard the democratic process. Just in one segment of his subject, the notion of independence versus party allegiance there is wide variation of viewpoint. Finn's integrity, compared with Turnbull's self-centred independence; Fitzgibbon's casual allegiance compared with Bonteen's or even Browborough's

⁴⁰ ibid., Ch. VIII, p.83.

⁴¹ Cockshut, pp. 96, 99.

where there is a high degree of selfishness involved. Trollope shows us in the Phineas novels the flaws and fallibility of all men engaged in government, but he does so without disillusionment or despair. Like St. Bungay he would prefer that the guardians came from the traditional Whig aristocracy, but realises that the growth of the state necessitates that it make room for the Banteens. Likewise the complex machinery of government must allow for the Barrington Erles, the Ratlers and the "little, ordinary, grey characters" as Cockshut terms them.⁴² Finn once more turns his back on political life, despite Plantagenet Palliser's persuasion, and the office proposed by Mr. Gresham. In the important Chapter LXXVII we are shown that the reasons for his withdrawal (setting aside his personal situation regarding Marie Goesler) are weak and self-indulgent. He has been wounded by seeing "a man whom he despised promoted" and "evil words between men who should have been quiet and dignified."⁴³ So he has the triumph of refusing Mr. Gresham's offer, but it is a triumph, that I imagine we are meant to view ironically.

Trollope's other great political figure is Plantagenet Palliser, a magnificent character who carries the author's investigation into political ethics a stage further. Unlike Finn he does not allow himself the luxury of gestures of independence; he has

⁴²ibid., p.98.

⁴³Phineas Redux, Ch. LXXVII, p.401.

been content to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer with more modest views of what is possible or desirable in legislation. He starts, of course, with the advantage of belonging to the Whig aristocracy and is a man of finer sensibilities than Finn. Through him Trollope can pursue with more intensity and at a higher level of power the question of what qualities make the statesman. Palliser represents the qualities of the patriot Trollope recognized in Cicero and his faults as a statesman were very much those Taylor warned about in his manual. To begin with Plantagenet is a gentleman, as Finn recognizes:

No Englishman whom I have met is so broadly and intuitively and unceremoniously imbued with the simplicity of the character of a gentleman. He could no more lie than he could eat grass.⁴⁴

He has those qualities embodied for Trollope in the term honestum. But with them he has excessive conscience, pride of rank, and congenital shyness. For the bad characters in politics or social life or commerce there is no wavering, none of the perplexity of weighing other people's opinions, no adherence to principle. Burgo Fitzgerald "lived ever without conscience".⁴⁵ George Vavasor with the aid of his agent, Scruby, contested Chelsea Districts with a trumped up cause. Harcourt is driven by egotism and ambition swiftly towards the post of Solicitor General. Such men do not doubt themselves

⁴⁴ ibid., Ch. LXXIV, pp. 368-9.

⁴⁵ Can You Forgive Her?, Ch. XVIII, p. 232.

but good men, like Sir Thomas Underwood, hesitate, and are for ever examining their own motives. Palliser is a particular case of the exquisite conscience among other drawbacks to political success. As Taylor's manual saw it the over active conscience was the statesman's chief danger:

His conscience will be liable to become to him as a quagmire, in which the faculty of action shall stick fast at every step.⁴⁶

So as a Prime Minister Palliser is a failure. Even his friend St. Bungay is forced to own to himself that "the strength of a man's heart was wanting" in Palliser when he falls into despair over the unwise act of paying expenses demanded by Lopez.⁴⁷ The Prime Minister presents a very complex figure, since the qualities which make Planty admirable as a gentleman are in such direct conflict with his ambitions and duties as a political leader. By nature he is modest, aloof, quiet and is therefore at a disadvantage in a sphere where gifts of articulacy and showmanship are required. There is much advice in The Statesman on gaining adherents and establishing the right degree of contact with supporters. This Gresham managed, but Plantaganet lacks what today tends to be called the "charisma" of the successful politician. Thus the Duke's rage at Major Pountney's impertinent enquiry about the Silverbridge vacancy is an excessive reaction to his perception of his difficulty

⁴⁶Taylor, The Statesman, Ch. IX, p.47.

⁴⁷The Prime Minister, Ch. L, p.114.

in finding the appropriate stance towards his adherents. The shy and proud man, as Taylor remarks, may easily fall into the hands of parasites, and this explains Palliser's horror at being involved by his wife with such men as Pountney and Lopez. Indeed, the well-intentioned entertaining by Lady Glencora underlines her husband's psychological difficulties as a statesman. What we might call 'public relations' at Gatherum Castle is the part of politics Plantaganet cannot accept; it belongs in his eyes to the vulgar and ignoble part he repudiates. The irony is that "a man altogether without guile, and entirely devoted to his country"⁴⁸ is at the same time filled with ambition and fascinated by the power of his position once he sees it slipping away from him.

Lady Glencora's entertainments bring Palliser into the sphere of commercialism in a sense, while Lopez, the shady businessman, takes false values into parliamentary life. Thus we have a fusion of ideas concerning the standards of public life and morality. In this juxtaposition we have several more bridges between high political standards and low commercial ones, such as the political rivalry between Lopez and the shy, upright, inarticulate Fletcher. Politics are linked with trade chiefly in the character of Lopez, and through Hartlepod of the San Juan Mining Company the commercial

⁴⁸ ibid., (Ch. LXII), p. 256.

spirit spreads through society. The aristocracy itself identifies with the dubious morals of commerce and we are reminded of Old Maule's comment in Phineas Redux

We have earls dealing in butter, and marquises sending their peaches to market.⁴⁹

After his successful attempt to extort election expenses from Plantaganet, Lopez partners Sexty Parker in the promotion of a drink called "Bios" which is to be proclaimed on hoardings and by mass advertisement. Trollope's satire on marketing has a very modern sound. Lizzie Eustace is invited to subscribe for the company:

"How are you to get people to drink it?" she asked after a pause.

"By telling them that they ought to drink it. Advertise it. It has become a certainty now that if you will only advertise sufficiently you may make a fortune by selling anything."⁵⁰

Advertising in this way is not too far removed from Lady Glencora's public relations - at least in her husband's eyes. Thus we have in The Prime Minister a subtle examination of the psychology of a statesman and a survey of the superficiality, vulgarity and expediency of harmful ethics of public life translated into the realm of commercial life.

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⁴⁹Phineas Redux, Ch. XXX, p.326.

⁵⁰The Prime Minister, Ch. LIV, p.161.

In The Way We Live Now private and public worlds, personal morality and the clash between traditional codes and the commercial spirit come together in even more intriguing combination. The following comments on this novel and a comparison with The Three Clerks shows how consistently Trollope maintained the ideals of honesty throughout his career, revealing the extent of evils by which such ideals are ever assailed, but always asserting a positive and hopeful philosophy. It is fitting that he prefaces his comments on The Way We Live Now in the Autobiography by a rebuttal of Carlyle's pessimism:

The loudness and extravagance of their /Carlyle's and Ruskin's/ lamentations, the wailing and gnashing of teeth which comes from them, over a world which is supposed to have gone altogether shoddywards, are so contrary to the convictions of men who cannot but see how comfort has been increased, how health has been improved, and education extended, - that the general effect of their teaching is the opposite of what they have intended.⁵¹

As I remarked earlier in this chapter these are the views substantially of political comment in St. Paul's Magazine ten years previously which he sanctioned as editor if he did not write them himself. The change is towards insecurity and bewilderment in the social climate of the seventies, although this is not a new phenomenon as The Three Clerks indicates. One detects, however, growing urgency in Trollope's voice in the political novels and culminating in the

⁵¹ Autobiography, Ch. XX, p. 304.

the comment in the Autobiography on The Way We Live Now:

Nevertheless a certain class of dishonesty, dishonesty magnificent in its proportions, and climbing into high places, has become at the same time so rampant and so splendid that there seems to be reason for fearing that men and women will be taught to feel that dishonesty, if it can become splendid, will cease to be abominable.⁵²

The danger Trollope clearly saw was a tendency not so much that the amorality of Lizzie Eustace, Lopez or Melmotte would have imitators, but that men would accustom themselves to vicious conduct and condone evil with a shrug of the shoulders. This was why Trollope felt constrained to become more of a satirist.

Although The Way We Live Now is greater in scope than The Three Clerks, both novels work in similar ways and with similar satirical intentions. Sixteen years separate them but they show to a remarkable degree the consistency of Trollope's literary art and the continuity of his views on human nature. One might call it the "unchanging world of Anthony Trollope" reversing the title of a recent study, for the themes I have been pursuing of individual fulfilment in love, marriage and career are constant against a social background which varies only in small ways throughout Trollope's literary career.

The change in the Victorian landscape had come in fact before Trollope's success as a novelist. Putting aside for a moment the

watershed of the Reform era, I should say that the significant period for Trollope's views on public issues and the conduct of government and business is the last few years of the 1850s. To men of his stamp the financial whirlwinds of that time marked a decisive break with the easy-going, gentlemanly ways of small house commerce, and produced the joint stock companies handling millions of pounds by means of vast share issues. The Crimean War Loan of sixteen million pounds in Consolidated Annuities at three per cent was taken up in 1855 by the de Rothschilds. The same year Strahan, Paul and Bates were found guilty of fraud and transported for fourteen years. Financial swindles on an even greater scale mark this period, and, what is most significant, link men in public office with monumental deception of the public. The case of John Sadleir, M.P. for Sligo, exposed in 1856, is typical of the kind of outrage which inspired Trollope to broaden his fiction in the satiric vein, to move from the cathedral precinct to the market square. Little Dorrit (1857) apparently inspired Trollope to submit an article to the Athenaeum;⁵³ unfortunately it has never been traced, but we can see its influence on The Three Clerks. Just as the Circumlocution Office was linked with Merdle's empire, so Trollope connected the share-pusher and the political sphere by means of the Hon. Undecimus Scott, Alaric Tudor and

⁵³Bradford Booth, "Trollope and Little Dorrit", N.C.F., II, 4 (March, 1948), pp. 237-40.

Manyloides. "Buy then cheap and sell them dear; above all things get a good percentage"⁵⁴ rings through most of Trollope's attacks on the commercial ethic.

It is clear from The Three Clerks that Trollope draws from the example of men such as Sadleir a lesson in the practice of commercial ethics applied to parliamentary behaviour. Here the villain is Disraeli, and before him Peel who embraced the doctrine of expediency by changing his mind over the Corn Laws:

He has taught us as a great lesson, that a man who has before him a mighty object may dispense with those old-fashioned rules of truth to his neighbours and honesty to his own principles, which should guide us in ordinary life.⁵⁵

From a lapse in the virtue of public men Trollope fears the contamination of society in general:

It has now become the doctrine of a large class of politicians that political honesty is unnecessary, slow, subversive of a man's interests, and incompatible with quick onward movement. Such a doctrine in politics is to be deplored; but alas! who can confine it to politics? It creeps with gradual, but still with sure and quick motion, into all the doings of our daily life. How shall the man who has taught himself that he may be false in the House of Commons, how shall he be true in the Treasury chambers? or if false there, how true on the Exchange? and if false there, how shall he longer have any truth within him? ⁵⁶

⁵⁴The Three Clerks, Ch. IX, p.97.

⁵⁵ibid., Ch. XXIX, p.347.

⁵⁶ibid., p.348.

And after Peel's apostasy a new political Gagliostro appeared - Disraeli whose party management and conduct of the nation's affairs became the target of Trollope's most ardent satire. In his monograph on Lord Palmerston Trollope draws some parallels which give us some idea of his affiliations. Palmerston was to be admired for his strength, industry, honesty and frankness and the unspectacular nature of his gifts:

he was by no means a man of genius, possessed of not more than ordinary gifts of talent, with no startling oratory, and, above all, with no specially strong liberal opinions.⁵⁷

Trollope sounds here as if he is voicing his approval of Sir Henry Taylor's sentiments about the statesman born to rule and above the scramble for power to a great extent by virtue of his noble birth. Under a barrage from Disraeli he remained, says Trollope admiringly, "cool as an old admiral cut out of oak."⁵⁸

Behind the spirit of the competitive examination system Trollope saw lurking the commercial ethic, so he linked the stories of his young heroes to the faults of a system which encouraged aggressive individualism and failed to discern what was true character, making Undy Scott appeal to Alaric Tudor in these terms:

most men circumstanced as you are have no chance of doing anything good till they are forty or fifty, and then their energies are worn out. You

⁵⁷Lord Palmerston, Ch. I, p.9.

⁵⁸ibid., Ch. XIV, p.207.

have had tact enough to push yourself up early,
and yet it seems you have not pluck enough to
take the goods the gods provide you.⁵⁹

Alaric shows himself first a reluctant pupil but avarice and ambition overcome his better nature and he learns rapidly "the necessity, of having a command of money".⁶⁰ In a long explanatory passage in Chapter XVII Trollope contrasts the actions and qualities of a gentleman with the practices of the modern usurer, noting that Alaric had not yet learned "the full value of the latitude allowed by the genius of the present age to men who deal successfully in money."⁶¹ Just what is possible is later revealed by Melmotte, whose wealth enables him to deceive thousands and persuade the electorate of Westminster to vote him into Parliament.

Emphasising the moral bankruptcy of the new politics allied with business enterprise in Chapter XXIX Trollope now calls Alaric "a robber with an education, a Bill Sykes [sic]"⁶² and poises him for the catastrophe. Before the great bubble of Alaric's imagined wealth bursts, however, Trollope extends his view towards the mecca of politicians and speculators alike:

⁵⁹The Three Clerks, Ch. IX, p.100.

⁶⁰ibid., Ch. XVII, p.186.

⁶¹ibid.

⁶²ibid., Ch. XXIX, pp. 345-6.

Oh, the city, the weary city, where men go daily
to look for money, but find none; where every
heart is eaten up by an accursed famishing after
gold; where dark, gloomy banks come thick on each
other, like the black, ugly apertures to the realms
below in a mining district, each of them a separate
little pit-mouth into hell.⁶³

The crash comes and Undy Scott is disposed of by the author with
ringing denunciations over three pages of chapter XLIV, while
Alaric is despatched to Australia where he will recapture his
moral health by hard work.

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The basic philosophy behind The Way We Live Now is no
more complex than this, but the story is allowed to speak for
itself and its vast scope is handled with much more skill. Again,
events of the economic situation in the years preceding its com-
position had much the same flavour as those of the late 1850s.
A period of stability and prosperity in the early sixties had
been followed by several disasters. In 1865, the year of Palmerston's
death, the Birmingham bank failure occurred. A rash of company
failures ensued including the crash of Overend, Gurney and Company
which caused widespread panic. Cattle disease, cholera, Fenian
outrages, popular demonstrations for Reform and lasting commercial
depression seemed to call into question the whole foundation of

⁶³ibid., Ch. XXXVI, p.432.

Victorian beliefs in progress. Union actions and strikes threatened the domestic economy still further. Women's movements indicated the stresses within marriage and the home. The spiritual bafflement of the early seventies showed itself in religious controversy and a growing number of converts to Roman Catholicism. In 1873 when Trollope began writing The Way We Live Now a strike of South Wales ironworkers caused much hardship among the labouring classes. Government was weak and unstable, although Gladstone managed to rally his party in the course of the year. The Conservative Party was described by John Bright as the Great Sunflower Company, whose affairs were a mystery even to its governing board.⁶⁴ Such were the conditions which formed the background of Trollope's great satire on the ways of trade. There was no lack of targets, and Trollope had by now acquired the skill to attempt a range broader than any of his earlier satire.

It appears, however, from the outline Sadleir transcribed that Trollope's original plan was for a much lighter novel in which Lady Carbury was to be "the chief character".⁶⁵ The usual romantic entanglements seem to have been in the forefront of Trollope's mind, together with some squibs between Roger Carbury and Paul Montagu [sic], a young man of Radical leanings, and some cuts at

⁶⁴quoted the Annual Register, 1873, Ch. III, p.86.

⁶⁵Sadleir, Commentary, Appendix 4, p.426.

reviewing, Catholic proselytising and snobbishness. The machinations of Augustus Melmotte do not appear to have had much part in Trollope's plan.

As it turns out he dominates the novel and joins the list of Trollope's great characters like Septimus Crawley and Plantagenet Palliser. Melmotte is the key figure in the story and a symbolic one, for his power is the delusion for which all the other characters will sell their souls. But he is a very solid, real person, unlike the somewhat insignificant figure of Dickens' financier, Merdle, with a great bearish appearance, a "brazen" forehead, and "a wonderful look of power about his mouth and chin."⁶⁶ His confidence shows in the swagger of deportment, as he faces members of the House of Commons near the end of the story and he goes down fighting which makes him a heroic figure among the time-serving, hypocritical folk around him. Dickens fixes Merdle with a few bald strokes, such as the hands clasping each wrist, but Trollope fills out Melmotte, showing in much detail his business methods and his desperate moments of solitude. Melmotte swindles on a vast scale and Trollope makes him convincing by showing his technique in some detail; he can be eloquent or taciturn, he bullies, wheedles, flatters, rattles off financial details, or simulates absent-mindedness, and when diplomacy

⁶⁶The Way We Live Now, Ch. IV, p.31.

seems of no use, he can always disappear down the back staircase.

We soon learn that he is buying his way into society by a grand ball at his Grosvenor Square mansion. The house "seemed to be endless" and the many lights on the staircase made it a "fairyland".⁶⁷ This is one of the symbolic effects Trollope achieves to show the fantasy of Melmotte's world. The Beargarden Club works in a similar way, and its owner, Herr Vossner, is another Melmotte in his small way. Vossner was a "jewel".⁶⁸ and was adapt at smoothing over the financial embarrassments of the club patrons, the idle and selfish young men of noble families such as Lord Nidderdale, Miles Grendall and Sir Felix Carbury. The club itself is new and aims at a cut-price elegance, possessing none of the civilised amenities which would attract "old fogies" - no morning papers, no morning-room, no library, but with facilities for gambling, billiards and dining. It was operated "with the express view of combining parsimony with profligacy," and cheated its members wholesale.⁶⁹ Towards the end of the novel Vossner bolts, and the club is suddenly shut down. The moral world of the club's habitués is upside-down, just as Melmotte's, in the words of the two Grendalls, is "topsy-turvy".⁷⁰ "No man could get

⁶⁷ibid., p.34.

⁶⁸ibid., Ch. III, p.24.

⁶⁹ibid.

⁷⁰ibid., Ch. XLIV, p.419.

a breakfast at the Beargarden, but suppers at three o'clock in the morning were quite within the rule."⁷¹ The parallel between Beargarden and Stock Exchange has been noted elsewhere, and one cannot fail to enjoy the irony of Trollope's duplications;⁷² the young men gamble without real money and sign i.o.u.s which are as airy and insubstantial as Melmotte's railway shares. Notice how Hamilton Fisker, the architect of the great railway to Vera Cruz project, not only enters the Beargarden Club as an honorary member but fleeces the members at cards. A crucial scene at the club is the cheating by Miles Grendall which echoes Melmotte's prodigious fraud.

From Vossner's small-scale operation we pass to the financial web of the maestro in which all of society is caught. "He could make or mar any company by buying or selling stock, and could make money dear or cheap as he pleased."⁷³ His empire reaches out to high society, the press and government, notably in the second part of the book when he contests Westminster against Mr. Ferdinand Alf, proprietor of the Evening Pulpit. Trollope traces a rapid upward scale of his social success, culminating in the dinner for the Emperor of China, and an even more rapid descent after his election to Parliament, when, rather than face exposure for his crimes he takes prussic acid. This is one aspect of the

⁷¹ ibid., Ch. III, p.27.

⁷² Sabine Nathan, "Anthony Trollope's Perception of the Way We Live Now", Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, X, 3, 1962, pp. 261-78.

⁷³ The Way We Live Now, Ch. IV, p.31.

book's shape; the other, is the network of relationships among the characters which is very well done indeed.

The central question posed by the title is the quality of personal and public life which I have been discussing throughout this thesis, so it provides a fitting summary to the whole work. "What is there that money will not do?" asks Lady Carbury of Mr. Melmotte.⁷⁴ It cannot make a gentleman, nor bring happiness, nor make a country worth fighting for, Trollope consistently maintained in his life and work. In Melmotte's society people are bought. Lord Alfred, the aristocratic kept man, has been bought and is now Melmotte's "head valet".⁷⁵ Melmotte is engaged in selling his daughter, Marie. Lord Nidderdale had already offered to "make her Marchioness in the process of time for half a million down."⁷⁶ Lady Carbury tried to buy her literary success by flirtations and begging letters. Barter operates in human relationships and is underlined by the irony of the financial manouverings between Melmotte and his daughter.

It seemed that there was but one virtue in the world,
commercial enterprise, - and that Melmotte was its
prophet.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ibid., Ch. XX, p.188.

⁷⁵ibid., Ch. XXII, p.208.

⁷⁶ibid., Ch. IV, p.32.

⁷⁷ibid., Ch. XLIV, p.411.

The centre of right thinking is Roger Carbury, a type of man we have encountered already in many of Trollope's novels; "a more manly man to the eye was never seen."⁷⁸ He is a summary of all Trollope's belief in the English country gentleman. The Carburys had been in Suffolk since the Wars of the Roses. They were not rich or ostentatious, they "never had anything but land."⁷⁹ They liked simple living, whereas their neighbours the Longestaffes needed footmen with powdered hair. Notice the enthusiastic description of Roger Carbury's house with its old-fashioned windows, its "thoroughly established look of old county position."⁸⁰ Carbury is at odds with the modern world, "People live now in a way that I don't comprehend,"⁸¹ he confesses in Chapter XLVI, and he condemns Melmotte, chides Lady Carbury and Felix, and quarrels with the pliable, ordinary man of the story, Paul Montague. It is important to see how Roger Carbury fulfils Trollope's intention, as I said at the start of this discussion, to focus his satire on society as a whole. He believes that "the touching of pitch will defile"⁸² whereas Lady Carbury, for example, being "essentially worldly," believes in expediency.⁸³ Everyone in the story seems bent on excusing himself

⁷⁸ibid., Ch. VI, p.51.

⁷⁹ibid., p.48.

⁸⁰ibid., Ch. XIV, p.129.

⁸¹ibid., Ch. XLVI, pp. 437-8.

⁸²ibid., Ch. VIII, p.69.

⁸³ibid., Ch. XIV, p.132.

with the plea of necessity or the end justifying the means. Booker condones puffery because "circumstanced as he was he could not oppose himself altogether to the usages of the time."⁸⁴ People let things drift, as Paul does when he omits to tell Mrs. Hurtle that he does not want to marry her. The degeneracy of the age to Roger Carbury is an unwillingness to have convictions, and to act on them:

Men reconcile themselves to swindling. Though they themselves mean to be honest, dishonesty of itself is no longer odious to them. Then there comes the jealousy that others should be growing rich with the approval of all the world, - and the natural aptitude to do what all the world approves. It seems to me that the existence of a Melmotte is not compatible with a wholesome state of things in general.⁸⁵

Trollope has no difficulty in relating the drift towards condoning bad moral conduct with the expediency practised by the press and in Chapter LXIX invents a paper he calls "The Mob" which preaches "the grand doctrine that magnitude in affairs is a valid defence for certain irregularities."⁸⁶ In terms of the characters of the story Paul acquiesces in unsavoury actions; Lady Carbury has so quieted her conscience that "lying had become her nature"⁸⁷, Lord Alfred has evaded moral responsibility and become corrupted; Lord

⁸⁴ ibid., Ch. 1, p.7.

⁸⁵ ibid., Ch. LV, pp. 44-5.

⁸⁶ ibid., Ch. LXIX, p.171.

⁸⁷ ibid., Ch. XXX, p.235.

Midderdale, however, has a sense of conscience still, and at the end of the book has promised to reform. Likewise Dolly Longestaffe retains moral principle. It should be noted how well Trollope has differentiated his group of Bertie Woosterish young men in this novel. But Dolly is the best of them. It has been said that he represents an "obsolete and ossified code of behaviour."⁸⁸ I should rather think of him as the evidence of that degeneracy mentioned above, born^e out by his disgust not only at Miles Grendall's cheating but at Felix Carbury's bringing it to his notice! Dolly has a conscience still: "A fellow oughtn't to let his family property go to pieces"⁸⁹ but he is deplorably weak. He needs Squercum, the cute attorney, to fight his battles for him.

The Longestaffe family are much more important to the novel than has been acknowledged. Through Lady Pomona and her husband Trollope broadens his attack on false values such as snobbishness and keeping up appearances. They are not "nouveaux riches" but they are not gentlefolk; they entertain vulgarly at Caversham, and condone Melmottism. Adolphus Longestaffe Senior, indeed, covets a place on the railway board. However, the strongest comment on their laxity and folly is made through Georgiana, their daughter, who reminds us of the many portraits in the novels

⁸⁸Nathan, Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, X, p.269.

⁸⁹The Way We Live Now, Ch. XXVIII, p.264.

of spinsters looking for a husband. Her desire is always to look well in the eyes of society and it is a blow to her pride when she must consider marrying Brehgert, the Jewish financier and partner of Melmotte. Utterly ignorant of Brehgert's worth and honesty she misses her opportunity. His letters to her in Chapter LXXIX are models of dignity and tact. At all events Georgiana loses him, and then rounds on her mother for causing her to end the relationship. Her mother observes "You couldn't have loved him, Georgiana,"⁹⁰ and her reply underlines the degradation and failure which has been Trollope's concern throughout the novel. The developing society, he suggests, is in danger of sacrificing not only virtue, but happiness. Georgiana's cry is:

"Loved him! Who thinks about love nowadays?"⁹¹

Trollope's whole fiction, it seems to me, stems from a moral philosophy of which love is the cornerstone. Introducing St. Paul's Magazine he spoke somewhat archly of his task as a man of letters as the singing of love-ditties, which had become second-nature to him. I have tried to show how love in its youthful excitement never lost its appeal for him from the tale of Katie Woodward to that of Ayala Dormer. I have followed his concern for the "bread and cheese" of love in which the fruit of his wisdom is evident, and his charity and compassion towards the lonely soul

⁹⁰ibid., Ch. XCV, p.425.

⁹¹ibid.

or the unhappily married. The consistency and continuity of his ideas about the specific problems of Ireland has been explored, and I have also investigated the moral attitudes which govern his concern with men at large, in their social behaviour and their occupations. My conclusion has to be that there is in Trollope a remarkable constancy in his attitude to life which at the same time reveals a deep tenderness and ability to see other points of view. Perhaps it is this generosity and breadth of understanding which has been the greatest element in making his work endure. At least we have come to recognise today that the tendency of his immediate successors to write him down as the accurate observer of the surfaces of ordinary life has been miserably inadequate, and has failed to do justice to his great qualities of imaginative insight. Cicero, said Trollope, was "a man singularly sensitive to all influences."⁹² To the careful reader this is a fitting epitaph for Anthony Trollope.

⁹²The Life of Cicero, I, Ch. I, p.20.

Appendix

A list of twenty popular authors stocked by
Mudie's Select Library, from catalogues issued
between 1857 and 1935

	1857	1858	1865	1869	1871	1875	1888	1900	1910	1920	1934	1935
W.H.Ainsworth	9	8	12	16	16	17	24	32	29	29	17	17
Rhoda Broughton	-	-	-	-	-	5	11	17	20	24	4	4
Miss M.E.Braddon	-	-	7	16	16	25	46	61	71	75	6	6
Wilkie Collins	6	6	9	11	11	15	26	29	29	29	10	10
Mrs. G.L.Craik	8	8	14	9	12	17	28	30	30	31	2	2
Disraeli	9	8	8	8	9	9	10	12	12	12	11	11
G.P.R.James	39	30	30	23	12	14	20	25	23	23	1	1
Julia Kavanagh	5	6	8	11	12	13	10	14	-	-	-	-
Charles Lever	13	12	15	20	22	22	26	28	26	26	5	5
E.Bulwer Lytton	20	19	22	21	20	25	26	26	27	27	22	22
Anne Manning	-	-	22	25	27	25	26	28	-	-	-	-
Captain Marryat	21	21	18	17	16	16	20	24	23	23	2	2
Mrs. M.Oliphant	8	9	21	22	25	29	53	92	75	73	4	4
Ouida	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	40	43	43	6	6
Charles Reade	4	5	8	9	11	13	18	19	20	20	6	6
Elizabeth Sewell	7	8	10	13	13	14	14	15	8	8	-	-
Anthony Trollope	2	4	14	16	21	30	49	52	45	45	20	20
G.Whyte-Melville	4	4	10	13	15	18	22	23	24	24	5	5
Mrs. Henry Wood	-	-	11	11	16	20	33	41	40	40	16	16
Charlotte Yonge	6	6	16	14	20	23	41	71	74	74	1	1

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